

THE
THOUSAND-YEAR
CONSPIRACY

Secret Germany Behind the Mask

by

PAUL WINKLER

"I know no way of judging the future but by the past."

PATRICK HENRY

[Speech at the Virginia Assembly, May 1765]

New York

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FOR MY CHILDREN

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Foreword

This book attempts to contribute to the work of identification of the forces behind Nazism. It results from research undertaken to substantiate this hypothesis: that Nazism is not the product of some "spontaneous generation" crystallized by Hitler's evil genius; and that it is not—as it has often been described—simply a reaction to the harsh terms of the Versailles treaty; finally, that Nazism does not derive from some basic trait of the German character.

Chapter I is introductory. It presents a few characteristic quotations from German writers of the past one hundred and fifty years. These passages, all written by members of what may be called the Prussian School, are evidence that *Mein Kampf* is merely a rehash of ideas frequently expressed before Hitler voiced them. But what was the common inspiration of these earlier authors? In seeking an answer to this question, we first perceive the contours of the conspiracy—very old but very real. Its existence—fantastic, at first thought—remains the only possible explanation of the facts.

Chapters II–VII are an attempt to retrace this centuries-old conspiracy, the actual subject of this book. Chapters II and III examine in particular the hidden forces responsible for the rise of Prussia and the Germany of Bismarck and Wilhelm II. Chapter IV introduces the "Fehme," the blood tribunal of the Middle Ages, into the picture. Chapters V, VI and VII show that Hitler's rise to power would have been impossible had not Hitler placed himself and his movement at the service of the Prusso-Teutonic forces.

In Chapters VIII, IX and X, the effort is made to search out behind the specific subject—the "actual conspiracy"—its fundamental basis. Whatever may have appeared earlier

to be a fortuitous development now takes its proper place within an evolution which derives from basic, organic causes. In these chapters we seek the reasons why the Prusso-Teutonic forces have pursued paths completely divergent from those taken by the other peoples of Western civilization. Here we face the "forces behind the forces."

Part One

CHAPTER I
THE CONSPIRACY AND
ITS MIRROR

IN 1921 Nazism was still in its infancy and rather harmless. During one of the sessions of the Bavarian "Landtag" (Parliament), the Deputy Gareis, with a heavy pile of documents in his hands, made a statement to the other Deputies which none of them seemed able to understand: "I have here the evidence of a thousand years' conspiracy—evidence which I shall present to you shortly."

A few days later Gareis was murdered. The criminal escaped punishment and the incident was practically forgotten. The evidence to which Gareis had referred was never revealed.

It was eighteen years after this, in 1939, that German military might began its goose-stepping march across the borders of Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, Yugoslavia, Greece. Today it is bent upon world conquest.

The forces which launched Germany on the path of conquest are those which were behind the murder of the obscure Bavarian Deputy. Those responsible for the conspiracy which Gareis mentioned decided—when he sought to unmask them—to destroy him. It was these men—all members of the same conspiratorial group—who, some eighteen years later, decided that the time was ripe to place world mastery in German hands.

Hitler and Nazism had very little to do with this conspiracy, although they occupy the present spotlight. This is not to suggest that Hitler and his party have not been important factors

in all the decisive actions for which—during the last nine years—Germany has been responsible. But these men are only tools in the hands of much more powerful forces. We shall have a great deal to say later about these forces—the “Prusso-Teutonic” groups and organizations.

If we want to win this war we must see our enemy clearly—and we cannot cure a sick world unless we understand the true nature of the disease. To destroy the evil we must first identify it. And this will be of equal importance even when the war is over and our problem is to win the peace.

The Forerunners of “Mein Kampf”

We intend to start this identification with the forerunners of *Mein Kampf*. We cannot expect to locate the roots of the evil in the literary field. But literature is a good mirror of much deeper currents.*

The writings of Treitschke and von Bernhardt and of the other authors of the Pan Germanic school were widely discussed in the United States and England before and during the last World War. Their connection, however, with the whole evolution of the Prussian idea—from the thirteenth century up to Nazism—has in general not been sufficiently emphasized.

Mein Kampf is a significant work from many points of view, but this work and its author, Hitler, are not the source of all evil in present-day Germany. In 1913, more than ten years before the publication of this work, General von Bernhardt, who had enormous influence on the army and the younger generation of Germany, stated in his book, *Our Future*: “For us there are two alternatives and no third—world dominion or ruin.”

* All quotations in this chapter from German and French authors are my own translations. Italics are liberally used for the sake of emphasis. All italics are mine. P.W.

Surplus Population as a Springboard

In *Germany and the Next War*, published in 1912, General von Bernhardt had this to say:

“Strong, healthy and flourishing nations constantly increase the number of their population; consequently they will be faced, after a given moment, with the necessity of extending their borders, of acquiring new land, in order to settle the overflowing population. However, since the Earth is almost completely settled by this time, acquisition of new land can be gained only at the expense of its present occupants—that is through conquest—which becomes a law of necessity.

“The right of conquest is universally recognized. At first this can be effected through peaceful means; overpopulated countries pour out streams of emigrants into other lands and territories. These emigrants, while submitting to the laws of the new land, try to create favorable living conditions for themselves to the detriment of the original inhabitants and in competition with them. This means conquest.

“Finally, the right to conquer through war has always been recognized. When an increasing population cannot acquire colonial lands from their primitive and uncivilized occupants, and *if it is nevertheless desirable to retain for the State the surplus population which can no longer be supported, there is only one thing left to do—self-preservation will force this nation to war and to the conquest of foreign lands. Right no longer belongs to the possessor, but rather to those who are victorious in war. . . .*

“. . . In such cases, right belongs to those who have strength either to maintain or to conquer. Might is the highest law. Before its tribunal war is the gauge of strength—war whose decisions are always biologically just since they evolve from the very essence of all things. . . . Even from the point of view of Christianity, one would come to the same conclusion. True Christian morality is of course based on the creed

of love: 'Love God above all, and thy neighbor as thyself.' This law, however, can claim no validity insofar as relations between nations are concerned, since, when applied to politics, it would surely lead to a conflict of allegiances. For an individual to profess love for another country would in most cases result in a negating of love for the people of his own country. A political system based on such foundations would surely be subject to the worst aberrations. Christian morality is personal and social, and can never become a political reality. It strives to develop the ethical personality, and to give it strength, so that this personality can live altruistically, in the interests of a community."

The cynical frankness of von Bernhardt is as great as Hitler's cynicism. Both resort to hypocrisy when their deductions are too unpalatable for their public. Both consider their special moral conception above discussion and consequently do not discuss it.

It is evident from the General's text that he looks upon emigration of surplus population only as a provisional remedy and that his solution consists of perpetual conquest. He prefers conquest, which "preserves" the surplus population "for the State"—and when he speaks of "State" he is thinking, of course, of the German State. He does not explain what natural law makes it necessary to preserve this surplus population for the State, nor why it cannot be peaceably integrated with the populations of other nations if there is no room left in the homeland. That "you wish to preserve them for the State" is a premise which needs no justification for this preacher of Germanism and Prussianism. "The very essence of the State is power," further declares von Bernhardt and, quoting Treitschke, that other great theoretician of German power, adds: "anyone not sufficiently virile to face this truth squarely has no right to meddle with politics."

Not for a moment does von Bernhardt consider limiting the populations of nations reproducing too rapidly. On the con-

trary, his point of departure is that "strong, healthy, flourishing nations increase their numbers."

In this, the conclusion is implicit: the German people, obviously strong, healthy and flourishing, will always have excess population, and consequently will ceaselessly have to annex territory until they dominate the world. "World dominion or ruin," the final tragic alternative of von Bernhardt's, implies, of course, that if Germany does not succeed in dominating the world, another country will perform this task, which awaits the strongest; and in that case the Germans will go to their ruin. Facing this choice, which he believes inevitable, his decision is made.*

War as a Necessity

Von Bernhardt's "indispensable" conquest can be accomplished only by war and the General believed that war should be not a defensive but an offensive operation—or rather, outright aggression. He cites the Prussian example as proof of this:

"Indeed, the foundation for Prussia's strength was established by the Great Elector † through successful wars of his own choice. Frederick the Great continued in the glorious tradition of his noble ancestor. . . . *Of all the wars through which he led his people not one was forced upon him; he never tried to delay the start of any of these wars. In order to deprive his foe of the advantage of the first movement he would take the initiative by attacking so that he could assure*

* Note at this point what von Bernhardt considered to be the first step toward world dominion: "In one way or another we must settle with France in order that we can gain that *military freedom of action so necessary to our world politics*. This is the first and most necessary demand for healthy German politics, and since the traditional French hatred for us can never be overcome through peaceful means, we must conquer it by sheer force of arms. France must be so thoroughly beaten that *she will never be able to stand in our way*."

† Friedrich Wilhelm (1640-88).

himself the best chance of success. How successful he was is well known. Had he lacked this heroic decisiveness, the entire historical development of European nations, and of mankind, would have taken a different turn."

Given such a state of mind the conclusions of present-day pacifists—to the effect that "War doesn't pay," or "If the Treaty of Versailles had not been so harsh, this war would never have broken out"—prove singularly impotent.

But General von Bernhardi did not invent anything himself. He only reduced to a formula a mode of thought cherished by a series of German predecessors. A century earlier Dietrich von Buelow (1757–1807), in *Modern Methods of War*, using a style cleverly veiling, by technical military terms, purposes none may doubt, said: "If the amount of military resources must sooner or later decide victory, it is obvious that little nations cannot succeed against the big ones, better equipped with war materials. In ancient times courage and discipline compensated for the inequalities of mass power among nations. . . . Today, however, all moral strength, all individual military talent of the small in number necessarily fails against the great. It is necessary, of course, to make good use of your own superiority of numbers in accordance with modern methods of war, but it remains certain that in modern battle the weak have never conquered the strong unless the latter have made some mistake. Besides, these modern methods of war have been developed only very recently. We shall know better how to benefit from all these advantages in the future.

"Great empires are not only wealthier. Their natural frontiers are more extensive than those of small, neighboring states. It happens frequently that a smaller state is completely enclosed within the borders of the larger one. . . . What a double advantage for the latter!

"I refer here only to small adjoining states, for in the nature

of things, it is first necessary to attack one's neighbor before coming to more distant States. If this rule is not observed countries separating two main adversaries may declare themselves either with or against the great empire. Should they declare themselves against this power everything is changed, since a coalition of little States is equivalent to one big State. Even in such a case, however, the concentration of power and coercive means in the hands of a single political body may still give the great power a military advantage over any federation of independent States."

Despite the reservations stated in these last lines, if leaders of all the little States successively engulfed by Hitler had taken the trouble to reread these words in time they might perhaps have been able to decide upon a common course of action instead of maintaining an illusory neutrality until their fall.

To get people to accept the idea of "perpetual war" (indispensable for the achievement of perpetual conquest), philosophical, or at least biological, arguments are needed. German science finds them, and demonstrates that the state of war is but a process of natural selection, permitting the human race to improve itself. Thus von Bernhardi states: "Without war, inferior or degenerate races could easily pollute and weaken all healthy, vital elements by their weedlike growth, and a general decline would be the result. 'War,' says A. W. von Schlegel, 'is as necessary as the struggle of elements in nature.'"

Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896), like von Bernhardi, had great influence on the thinking of the generations of Germans immediately preceding Nazism.

Treitschke is a conspicuous example of what is known as "Prussianism." We shall see later what significance the formation of "Prussianism" had in the evolution of German thought. Specifically we shall see that "Prussianism" is much less an ethnic reality than a special state of mind, a crystallization of thought that has developed over the course of centuries

through some remarkable process. Close examination of Prussianism will permit us to see more clearly into numerous details of the German problem.

Treitschke, this typical Prussian, was not legitimately a Prussian at all. Son of a Saxon general, descended on his father's side from a recently Germanized Czech family (a fact he was reluctant to admit), Treitschke was powerfully attracted to the Prussian way of thinking. This Prussian by vocation deemed that only Prussia possessed the necessary strength to dominate all the other German States and lead Germany toward the conquests he so ardently desired.

Concerning the concept of war and its role in the existence of nations, Treitschke preached thus to future generations:

"War is not only a practical necessity, but is also a theoretical necessity, an exigency of logic. The concept of a State implies the concept of war, since the essence of a State is power. The State is the people organized into a sovereign power. . . .

"A State which renounces war and which in advance submits to an international tribunal gives up this sovereign power, that is, its very self. Whoever dreams of permanent peace asks for something not only unachievable but absurd; he commits an error of elementary reasoning. . . .

"War, it is true, may alienate nations from one another and yet, to a certain extent, it brings them closer together, by making them acquainted with their own and their neighbors' resources. War as an intermediary among nations is often more effective than universal trade. A nation which clings to the visionary hope of everlasting peace will inevitably end in decay within its haughty isolation. History builds and destroys tirelessly; never weary, she exhumes humanity's divine treasures from the ruins of ancient worlds in order to restore them to a new world. *To whoever may believe in this perpetual growth, in the eternal youth of our race, it is quite evident that war is an inevitable necessity.*

"That war should be forever banished from the earth is not only an absurd hope but profoundly immoral. If it were ever realized, we should witness atrophy of many essential, sublime forces in the human soul, and transformation of the terrestrial sphere into a vast temple of selfishness. . . .

"On the other hand, the State has the right to consider itself an end, since it contains the essential conditions for prosperous social life. . . .

"Every people, and particularly one of high cultural development, runs the risk, during a long period of peace, of degenerating into egotism. Such a race should consider a great and righteous war which fate may send them as a favor, but the more the comfortable habits of social existence have crept into their spirit, the rougher the counter-blow may seem.

"I have said 'fate may send them a war,' because the reason the value of this cruel remedy is so rarely appreciated is that no doctor among mankind dares prescribe war as a beneficial potion for a sick people.

"As soon as a nation hears the echo of this cry of alarm: 'The State is in peril—our existence is threatened!' then awakens the highest virtue, courage of sacrifice which may never be so freely or widely displayed in times of peace. . . .

"Among the thousands of men engaging in battle, blindly obeying the will of 'All,' each is aware how little his life is worth compared to the glory of the State; each feels himself hemmed in by profound forces which dominate him. From this, in every important war, will spring deep religious feelings, and the sublime spectacle, incomprehensible to pure reason, of enemy armies, praying to the same God for victory.

"The grandeur of war is to be found in these acts considered shocking by a debilitated civilization.

"Men who have never done each other any harm, who accord one another the high esteem one owes his chivalrous enemies, kill each other. They sacrifice in this line of duty not only their lives, but what is infinitely more painful, natural

sentiment, the instinctive love for humanity, and horror of blood. The insignificant self, with all its noble and base instincts, must sink into the will of the 'All.'

"I ask of whoever may find this barbaric: why, then, has no great beneficial idea of political or religious freedom ever been accepted by men without christening by blood? And why has war been, in every age, the favorite theme of the arts?"

The cynicism of Treitschke's reasoning is remarkable: war, in itself, is a blessing, but it would be dangerous to confess it to the people ("... the reason the value of this remedy is so rarely appreciated is that no doctor among mankind dares to prescribe war as a beneficial potion for a sick people"). Instead of such a frank admission the cry of alarm is sounded: "The State is in peril—our existence is threatened," and people rush into war with enthusiasm.

It would be an illusion to believe that Treitschke speaks in the abstract, or that his purpose is to develop theories to benefit humanity. Reasoning in this manner, he hopes to benefit only his own people ("our race," as he has already expressed it), whose fate alone concerns him: "To whoever may believe in this perpetual growth, in the eternal youth of our race, it is quite evident that war is an inevitable necessity." This was written in 1869.

The opinions of Treitschke and von Bernhardt are not isolated phenomena, but derive from distant sources. And if we admit that *Mein Kampf* merely outlines clearly the objectives of a certain Germany, without adding anything really new, it is interesting to note that Hitler's spiritual ancestors were in turn descended from a long line of thinkers of similar leanings.

It was a mistake on the part of the Western world not to attach in time sufficient importance to this type of thought—which was in violent contradiction to the basic ideas of Western civilization. Doubtless people were lulled by the illusion that such thinking represented purely theoretical fantasies of

a few German scholars. They were not able to see that actually such thoughts were extremely significant manifestations of a state of mind having its roots in the distant past; and that these manifestations might in turn result in a very particular and very dangerous way of thinking in future German generations.

Later we shall discuss the early, fundamental causes of German aggressiveness. For the moment let us review briefly more recent spiritual ancestors of Hitler, contemporaries and predecessors of Treitschke and von Bernhardt.

Starvation as a Springboard

Friedrich List (1789–1864), along with several minor economists active around 1840, was responsible for formulating the principal theories on which present-day German economic conquest is based.

After emigrating to Pennsylvania and becoming an American citizen, List was concerned only with Germany's greatness. He returned to Germany in 1840 to publish there his principal work, in which he outlined the basis for his *National System of Political Economy*. Violently opposed to the principle of free trade because it gives the same advantages to weak as to strong nations, he would welcome its use without reservation within the continent of Europe, once the continent were dominated by Berlin; and he had high hopes that this would be achieved as soon as possible. So far as his own age was concerned, however, he was an extreme protectionist and advocated development of new industry in Germany—through high protective tariffs raised against competition of foreign countries. He took into full account the risk of losing Germany's foreign markets, since protectionism always provokes reprisals. His remedy is simple: stimulate tremendous expansion of Germany, including conquest of Europe, acquisition of colonies in Australia, New Zealand, India and the Americas.

Then Germany would no longer have to fear that she might lack foreign markets in a protectionist world.

According to List a nation must conquer all countries lying in its sphere of economic action—by degrees, but steadily; and this sphere of action is defined as every territory which may serve as outlet, or which contains raw materials the nation may need. In the long run this becomes perpetual conquest, for eventually every foreign country, however distant, represents a potential export market, or is a producer of useful raw materials. In the ideas of List, we find the economic basis for General von Bernhardi's thesis: "For us there are two alternatives and no third—world dominion or ruin." And here too is to be found the complete outline of Germany's recent and present economic attitude—the old thesis, slightly improved upon by Dr. Schacht.

The process is simple. Schacht's Germany settled into a system of the most absolute protectionism, the system so dear to List. This was accomplished through methods more modern and effective than tariffs. Germany was the first country, after the World War, to return to exchange control, adopting it not because of any financial need, but deliberately, in order to create a system of total protectionism. The old-fashioned protectionist use of high tariffs to discourage imports becomes outdated. Imports are now made practically impossible: the State releases no currency to private business to cover cost of imports purchased abroad, with the single exception of certain raw materials or tools considered by the State to be absolutely indispensable. As in all systems of protectionism, the population of the country whose production is thus "protected" must suffer: and their suffering becomes more acute the more the system is improved. Soon the world is accused of starving the German people, and of withholding raw materials necessary to German industries. (No mention is made of the fact that these materials had been available to Germany in a world of free exchange—the system she was the first to deviate from;

and that her importers, on a free monetary market, could have obtained the necessary funds to pay for any quantity of raw materials.) Germany is pictured as "deprived of her place in the sun." Thus a favorable psychological atmosphere is created within the country and abroad as well, to prepare for world conquest "by degrees, yet steadily," as outlined by List. The achievement of List's plan for the future is considerably advanced by the repetition of the specious statement to the German people: "Poor Germany must starve unless she succeeds in dominating the other nations."

List bolsters the self-confidence of his compatriots by asserting that a specific determinism demands supremacy of the German race. According to him, the Latin races, under French influence, and the Slavic nations led by Russia, have not the power for domination. Germanic races, among which he included Anglo-Saxons and Germans, possess this power to the greatest extent. Of the two, his choice is simple: Germany must supplant England; build a powerful fleet, extend her colonizing to all corners of the world; and finally unite all other Europeans against English supremacy, so that she can direct the destiny of the world.

Charles Andler, a French author, summed up certain ideas of List in his work, *The Origins of Pan-Germanism*, published in 1915: *

"It is necessary to organize continental Europe against England. Napoleon I, a great strategist, also knew the methods of economic hegemony. His continental system, which met with opposition even from countries which might have profited from such an arrangement, should be revived, but, this time, not as an instrument of Napoleonic domination. *The idea of uniting Europe in a closed trade bloc is no longer shocking if Germany assumes domination over such a bloc*—and not France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, willingly or by force, will enter this 'Customs Federation.' Austria is assumed to be

* Charles Andler, *Les origines du Pan-Germanisme*, Paris, 1915.

won over at the outset. Even France, if she gets rid of her notions of military conquest, will not be excluded. The first steps the Confederation would take to assure unity of thought and action would be to establish a joint representative body, as well as to organize a common fleet. *But of course, both the headquarters of the Federation and its parliamentary seat would be in Germany.*

"At once the sharing of common commercial advantages would begin. List proposes something like a cooperative league of nations, in which all profits would be distributed in proportion to investments. European vitality, intelligence and order would put the Far East to good use. Oriental ports would become 'Free cities' where European agents would deal with native authorities in the capacity of advisors duly accredited and diplomatically protected. Austria would extend its borders to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. A German navy would be built up. *Prussian colonies would be established in Australia and New Zealand, where England has firmly planted her flag but has failed to exploit resources.* How could England resist all the navies and the concentrated economic power of a united Central Europe?

"Since Germany possesses a greater stock of vital energy and superior economic ability to that of any other nation *one may guess which nation would be likely to benefit most from this association,*—an association which was to be based on the principle of equal privilege for all members."

Various firsthand reports have given us a fairly accurate picture of the manner in which Nazi Germany is applying the principle of "economic collaboration" to the "occupied" countries, and how, through her agents, she has seized control of all the great industries of France, Belgium and Holland. We have also seen how she has allowed the whole of her economic policy to be dictated by Dr. Schacht. All this indicates clearly that Hitler is merely applying the century-old theories of List in the economic sphere.

The Origin of the "Lebensraum" Theory

Ernst-Moritz Arndt (1769–1860) as early as 1803, in his work *Germania and Europe*, expressed political ideas based on the "right of the strongest," highly significant for the future. He believed that each nation owed it to itself to take advantage of every opportunity for imposing its will. Nations which allow such an opportunity to slip by deserve spoliation by their neighbors. "A State," says Arndt, "must first have a stable foundation, geographically speaking, and develop further according to rules of chance, and by virtue of its own character. The only restrictions laid down for the State are those of climate and surrounding territories. Yes, each State has the right to make strong representations to its neighbors, should the latter unjustly seize air and light necessary to its growth and development."

Arndt expresses himself "euphemistically" about a point of view which might appear too brutally direct to a section of the public. Hitler, who commits the gravest injustices in the name of "justice" and "equality of rights," has drawn excellent inspiration from Arndt's methods. His "Lebensraum" is a mask for the simple will-to-conquer, as was Arndt's "right (for each State) to make strong representations to its neighbors should the latter unjustly seize air and light necessary to its growth and development." It is evident too that in speaking of "each State" Arndt had Germany, and particularly Prussia, in mind.

We shall see what a great influence the Teutonic Knights of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had on the evolution of the Germany we know. It is natural for a man who thinks like Arndt to say that because Poland did not manage to put to rout or destroy the Teutonic Knights, she no longer had the right to exist. This is the theory that "since you once were weak enough to grant your enemy his life, you must permit him to kill you now."

"Poland did not realize," Arndt says, "that her duty as a nation was first of all to defend her coast line and drive the Teutonic Knights away from it.

"This negligence spelled death for Poland.

"When in the eighteenth century Prussia and Russia seized Poland's entire maritime domain, it meant that Poland no longer existed. With no outlet to the sea, surrounded by powerful neighbors and having no implements of higher culture, nor any natural frontiers for defense, it was impossible for her ever to become anything. Sooner or later she must disappear . . .

"According to our conception of things, small nations must disappear because geographically they rarely possess the means for subsistence.

"The natural frontiers of Poland were assaulted by Prussia, Courland and Livonia; and this injury was certainly the main cause of Poland's final political death."

And Arndt adds:

"Today Holland constitutes the most glaring violation of Germany's natural frontier."*

Defense Will Not Win a War

It is not only the political and economic ideas of "New" Germany which were expressed much earlier. In the realm of military tactics also, all the German principles now described as "new" were discussed in detail over thirty years ago by

* The following words, no less significant, are quoted from another work of Arndt, *Spirit of the Times* (*Geist der Zeit*): ". . . Let us declare a sweeping, merciless war against France so that our mighty efforts may carry us beyond the Rhine. And let us not return our swords to their sheaths until all German speaking peoples, those of Alsace, Lorraine, Luxembourg and Flanders, have been emancipated and restored to the German Empire. Here is the task and the goal. And if we should fail to liberate them, in spite of all our efforts we should not realize this goal we may as well not undertake anything else, for in vain will God have offered his treasures to the Germans, only to take them back because we are too lazy to enjoy them."

General von Bernhardt. Dietrich von Buelow, of whom we have already spoken (and who died in 1807) had this to say in his *Spirit of Modern Warfare*:

"*We must fight only offensive wars.* In a defensive war all positions and all parallel marches are useless: they will never suffice as a wall against the enemy, as we shall soon clearly realize. Regardless of how strong or well protected or how well chosen any position may be which you defend against frontal attack, you will be expelled from it by the enemy. He will quickly achieve this result by attacks on your flank, especially if his forces are greater.

"I must boldly assert—although this principle may be new—that defensive wars should never be waged: as soon as possible the role of aggressor should be assumed, and operations conducted against the enemy's flank and rear."

Von Buelow also clearly formulated the ideas underlying the penetration—now a sad reality—by the Fifth Column into democratic countries, including creation of "economic allies" in enemy countries in the persons of a few great industrialists to whom economic advantages are promised. This system gave Germany excellent results in the conquest of France, and before America's entry into the war she tried to employ similar methods in the United States as well. In the writings of von Buelow are anticipated all the advantages which Germany's masters later gained in several countries by carrying on a campaign of corruption of the enemy at home.

"Insofar as everything has its price," says von Buelow, "the amount of money available is also a decisive factor. Greed for gain is so irresistible that one may buy materials of war even in enemy countries when they are not available at home . . . to say nothing of the advantage possessed by the wealthier for succeeding in their purposes through bribery and corruption. On this subject Montecuccoli has already said: 'To wage war, three things are necessary. . . . Money, Money, and Money.'"

The "Ideal Prussian"

In reviewing briefly the theories of a few German writers of the past 150 years, we wished merely to emphasize that ideas generally attributed to Hitler and Nazism originate from much earlier sources. For these very writers (and we might have cited many more at the risk of becoming repetitious) have only formulated principles underlying a curious "cultural trend," generally described as "Prussianism," but never clearly defined. Taken individually, such texts, frequently cited before the World War, were regarded as characteristic fantasies of slight significance, springing from that "Prussian insolence" about which nothing could be done. Related to each other, and related chiefly to the future (which has since become the present) and the past, those texts assume new significance, and we are obliged to attribute equal, if not greater, importance to them than to *Mein Kampf*.

We will frequently deal with the origins and purposes of "Prussianism" in this book. We attribute to this word a meaning much wider and reaching much further back in time than that of most writers—for whom Frederick II, King of Prussia, is the prototype, if not the actual founder of Prussianism. Frederick II, while in many ways an extremely interesting personality, and one of the most important forces in the rise of Prussia, was, however, only one of many in a long line of men formed by the Prussian school. Besides, this close friend of Voltaire was much too strongly tinged with humanitarianism to be considered an ideal representative of the school which is fundamentally opposed to humanitarian ideas. That a number of his actions can be explained only by the inspiration he received from the Prussian tradition does not alter this fact.

Frederick II was unquestionably a great Prussian, but an imperfect Prussian, much as was Bismarck, that other great Prussian, who has often mistakenly been described as the greatest Prussian statesman of modern times—mistakenly be-

cause, even though Bismarck did render tremendous service to the Prussian cause, his attitude did not always please the high priests of Prussianism. Having conquered France, he attempted to live at peace with her. He limited Germanic ambitions in the Balkans. He opposed his own country's tendencies toward colonial expansion. Although many of his acts were in harmony with the purest precepts of the Prussianism of Arndt, List, and von Buelow, Bismarck retained a certain restraint and a trace of respect for Christian ethics—the opposite of Teutonic ethics (as described by several authors quoted). Thus Bismarck cannot be considered an ideal Prussian.

This ideal Prussian, this man of "Prussian dreams" (which, in previous centuries, would have been called "Teutonic dreams") does exist, however, and is none other than Hitler. Here one must search for the secret of his success among his compatriots, who, for centuries have been awaiting a kind of Teutonic Messiah, who would ruthlessly achieve an ideal definitely opposed to conceptions of Christian and humanitarian morality.

Constantin Frantz, German writer of the nineteenth century, refers in one of his books to a little known work by Bollmann entitled *Justification of Machiavellism*. He says:

"The contents of this book are worthy of its title. What Machiavelli once claimed for Italy is applied here to Germany. The writer considers all small political parties powerless; *and he hopes for an armed reformer who, with blood and iron, shall unite Germany, and to whom anything shall be permitted provided he attain the proposed goal. Powerful and of irresistible attraction, this man will know how to accomplish such a task.*"

Frantz tries hard to apply this prophetic description to Bismarck, but does not Hitler fit this picture much more accurately than Bismarck? Besides, the ideal of a man devoting himself exclusively to the German cause, to whom "*anything*

shall be permitted," is much older than Bollmann's prediction, and even older than the "Prince" of Machiavelli, to whom Bollmann and Frantz credited this figure. This is the "man" of whom Heine spoke (see pages 337-40): "the man whom the German people await, the man who will bring to them the life and happiness they have so long hoped for in their dreams." This is a purely Teutonic conception, as we shall see, at least 700 years old. In the course of centuries it has had numerous ramifications, so that it has become rooted in the spirit and subconscious mind of the German people. Later it was considered a Prussian conception. Small wonder, then, that Hitler in his uncompromising brutal attitude of the "savage ideal" should have evoked such response in the hearts of the Germans.

Prussians by Adoption

The fact that Hitler is not Prussian by birth does not prevent his being the "ideal Prussian." The most ardent Prussians were not born in Prussia, for Prussianism is first of all a state of mind and a special way of thinking shaped over centuries, and to which men of diverse origins have felt strongly attracted. We have seen that Treitschke, that fervent Prussian, was by birth part Saxon and part Czech. Fichte, who placed his philosophy at the service of Prussianism, also came from Saxony. Hegel, another great philosopher who recognized his "ideal State" in Prussia, was south-German by birth, and Houston Chamberlain, famous theorist of the Prussian school, was of English origin.

Hitler's Prussian inclinations were not restricted to the realm of theory. He opened the way to power for himself in 1932 and 1933 when, with the help of von Papen, he concluded an effective alliance with the powerful Prussian forces directing Germany's affairs under various guises. From that time on this agitator, who had until then been taken seriously

only in internal German politics, became a veritable world threat.

While Nazism, as a truly demagogic movement in its early days in Munich, was making noisy attacks on all existing power, including the power of Berlin, it provided a certain spiritual nourishment to thousands of frustrated German souls, who appreciated such talk. But from the day when Hitler concluded his alliance with the Prussian Junker leaders, Nazism became a front for Prussianism and entered into systematic planning for conquest of world power. From that time on, Nazism became a most threatening reality for all other countries. We must, however, never forget the forces hiding behind this movement, forces which we shall attempt to expose.

Prussia Ueber Alles

Christianity, and humanitarianism which it inspires, believe in the supremacy of the human personality and the "Rights of Man." All Western ethics are based on this belief. Prussianism, however, admits only the supremacy of the State, to which it demands absolute submission of the individual, at the expense of his liberty, his private interests and his personal well being. General von Bernhardt summarized this idea thus: "There is, as Fichte has taught us, but one virtue, to forget about oneself as a person; and but one vice; to think of oneself. In the final analysis, the State is bearer of all culture, and as such she has the right to claim for herself the individual strength of her citizens."

According to the Prussian theory, the State itself is nothing but *power*, and the individual must do everything to contribute toward the infinite increase of this power. No attempt is made to define the State, nor to explain why it has the right to this absolute submission of its citizens. The theory is offered as a sort of dogma, belief in which forms the very essence of Prussian welfare.

States are forged by the fire and blood of wars of conquest. Great and powerful countries gain possession of the weak, and these weak countries can only disappear. War, consequently, is not only inevitable, but forms the very basis of the State's ethics. For specialists in Prussian theology the validity of reasons for which wars are waged does not matter. They readily admit that wars waged by Prussian kings may have had no legal bases. What matters is that these wars contributed to territorial gains and increased Prussian power. Christian morality, fundamental to legal concept, may be tolerated for private relationships, and for maintaining social equilibrium, but as for the State itself, the latter determines its own ethical laws.

Under the cloak of this "ethics of the State," everything which according to traditional moral conceptions would be severely condemned, is excusable and even laudable if it is done in the interests of the State: broken pledges, alliances and friendships negated, treaties disregarded, and whatever is considered a "lie" by ordinary human beings. The entire technique later applied by Hitler, which is ably analyzed by Francis Hackett and by Raoul de Roussy de Sales in their works based on *Mein Kampf* and Hitler's speeches, had already been outlined by this school of thought.

The evidence offered by authors of the Prussian school to support their contention that Prussia, more than any other country, merits such an impressive future is extremely vague. Often the evidence is of a cultural nature; they attempt to demonstrate that Prussia (or "Germany," understood as a Germany dominated by Prussia) could contribute much more to world civilization than any other country. But most often, instead of proof, a sort of "realistic philosophy" is suggested as sufficient: Prussia has known how to extend her domain through victorious wars at the expense of other nations; therefore she seems to have been chosen by Providence to continue in this direction. And since, in the final reckoning, a

single State is destined to dominate all the others, these German thinkers (expressing an entirely personal point of view, and vouchsafing no explanation) conclude that it may just as well be a German state which assumes this rôle. But, they say, Prussia alone has shown throughout history that she has the strength or, if one prefers, the ruthlessness to bend other German people to her will.

"Let us, then, rally round her flag," say Fichte, Treitschke and all the other super-Prussians born in different parts of Germany. ("Let us ally ourselves with her," says Hitler.) "Let us," they agree, "help her seize power in Germany, and this Prussianized Germany will one day succeed in conquering the world."

CHAPTER II

THE CAVALCADE OF THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

EVERY PLAN FOR international regulation which has been put into practice, or merely proposed (including the League of Nations), presupposes a common ethical principle among the participants. Without such a similarity of moral views it is impossible to achieve any international stability whatsoever. Religions, and the schools of philosophy which they have inspired, have successfully brought the leading nations of the world to a more or less common moral denominator. From this angle, Christianity is not in sharp conflict with Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism.

Prusso-Teutonism and the Vehme

The Catholic Church at first, then Lutheranism, performed the task of ethical education in Germany too. It can hardly be said that the masses of the German people are influenced by the moral teachings of religion to a lesser degree than other nations. But separate from the "Christian" moral influence—which still carries weight with large portions of the German population—two distinct developments are discernible. These derive from a very different, much more primitive moral concept, barbarous from one point of view and in any case pre-Christian.

To say that these two developments stem from pre-Christian ethics may on the surface seem contradictory, for both arise in direct line from organizations of a definitely religious character. The *Prusso-Teutonic tradition* (or briefly "Prussian-

ism") originates directly from the religious *Order of Teutonic Knights*, and the "*Fehmlic*" tradition is derived from the notorious *Fehme*,* the blood-tribunal of the Middle Ages, which had definite ties to the church. But centuries have elapsed since both organizations discarded all their religious characteristics.

Immediately before the first World War, the problem of "Prussianism" was often subjected to the scrutiny of the world and was held responsible for German ambitions of that period. Feeling the danger, the Prussian group acted according to time-honored principles for outwitting savage animals: "If you are without a weapon and fear the lion, lie down and play dead."

The trick succeeded, and it is currently believed that the old "Prussian" or "Junker" menace has practically died out since Hitler's accession to power in Germany.† It is extremely important that we penetrate this camouflage. It is not only useful to reveal the connection between Prussianism and present-day Germany; it is equally useful to show clearly the roots from which Prussianism originated in history long before Frederick II of Prussia and the Great Elector. Only by understanding what these roots were can we appreciate what present-day Germany really is.

Prussianism, in its usual interpretation, hangs in the air. Isolated from its past and from its present, it represents nothing more than an historical curiosity with no direct significance for our times.

For us "Prussianism" goes back to the early part of the thirteenth century and is still very much alive in our day. It is the heir of the world-embracing ambitions of the Caro-

* Also called Vehme or Veme.

† Heinrich Hauser, in *Time Was—Death of a Junker*, bewails the passing of the Prussian Junker, and has succeeded in arousing sentimental regrets among his readers that these "good people" are no more. (Hauser's good faith in the matter is not questioned here.)

lingian and "Holy Roman" Emperors—but at the same time it is also what it became during the centuries in the stuffy and nauseating hot-house of East Prussia.

The principal events in Germany between the two World Wars, the reasons for Hitler's rise to power and the events that followed can be understood only by a thorough scrutiny of the Prusso-Teutonic and Fehmic organizations. This should enable us also to understand better the connections between various writers—"theologians of Prussianism," a few of whom we have cited—and the motives which were sufficiently powerful to make them unanimously adopt an attitude in the question of morals which *our* moral sense, faithful to tradition, strenuously rejects.

The Rulers of Prussia

Before we go back to the origins of the Prusso-Teutonic conspiracy we may recall that the "Germany" we know is not the same as the Empire which bore this name until 1806. That Empire was composed of a number of little States whose principles of government were almost all similar to those of other European States and whose ethical doctrines were essentially Christian.

In the second half of the nineteenth century a remarkable manoeuvre was effected. Prussia, one of these States (the only State whose principles were profoundly different from those of other German and foreign States), succeeded in imposing her rule—at first in 1866 over the other North German States, and in 1870 over every German State except Austria. This two-fold manoeuvre, carried out in first-rate Machiavellian fashion, allowed Prussia to indoctrinate all Germany with her principles. And our centuries-old Prusso-Teutonic problem became from that day on only a "German problem."

Prussian principles consisted of discipline with a vengeance,

aggressive methods, absolute submission of individuals to the interests of the State, and disregard of all Christian morality where these interests were concerned. From 1870 Germany, ruled by the Prussians, assumed the rôle of a *Great-Prussia*, although her "Prussianization" had only been partly completed. Despite the Prussian influence, a number of traditional German elements had been preserved throughout the country. It was now a question of making the whole Reich accept the idea widely propagated by nineteenth-century Prussian theoreticians: that Germany could not achieve prosperity except by imposing her will, through unceasing conquest, upon other countries. World peace, that age-old dream, could be attained only by creating a unified world under German rule. To reach this goal—a world under German rule—any method would be acceptable. The favored method for effecting this expansion was by bloody wars, deliberately started, and so ruthless that, according to the Prussian theory, the transformation would be all the more lasting.

Bismarck was the man who accomplished total seizure of all Germany by Prussia. Although of the same turn of mind as other Great-Prussians, he felt that any plan for expansion must be applied slowly and progressively. Guided by opportunistic considerations he introduced a parliamentary system into Prussia and Germany, which satisfied the masses, even though he personally was opposed to representative government.

His friends, whose spokesman he was, were even more opposed to this than Bismarck—but they knew that behind this façade of representative government the real power would remain in their hands, if they proceeded wisely. The conspiracy which had started many centuries ago—a materially founded, actual conspiracy and not a purely ideological and abstract heritage—would live on. The façade may change but the goals always remain the same.

A Conspirational Community is Born

Hans Krieg, Nazi author writing in 1939 in the *Zeitschrift fuer Politik* (Vol. 29) says this, directing his words to readers in Germany:

" . . . The Teutonic Order, having fulfilled its historical role, was destined to disappear as an organization. However, its legacy of a mighty Prussia, and the Order's basic idea of *conspirational community* remains a sacred duty for us today."

The Prusso-Teutonic organizations of the twentieth century and "Prussian spirit" in general stem directly from the Teutonic Knights of the twelfth century. This religious order, founded at Acre, Syria, in 1190, during the time of the Crusades, from its beginning was distinguished from the two other orders of knights of the Holy Land, the Templars and the Knights of St. John (known later as the Knights of Malta), by its strictly national, or rather racial, character. In order to join the Teutonic Knights, one had to prove pure *German* ancestry (*noble* ancestry, of course), whereas membership in the Templars or the Knights of St. John was open to nationals of any country.* Nevertheless there was a definite preponderance of Latins in the membership of these two orders. As a reaction against this, the German Crusaders decided to found a hospital of their own in the Holy Land, reserved exclusively for German Knights who were sick or wounded. A few years later, in 1198, this organization was changed into a Knights' Order. King Philip of Swabia took it under his patronage in 1206; the Germano-Roman Emperor Otto IV did the same in 1213. From this time on the organization may be considered as a purely German *political instrument* of the highest importance.

* At the beginning of the nineteenth century anyone wishing to enter the Teutonic Order had to prove that eight paternal and eight maternal ancestors were purely German. (C. J. Weber, *Das Ritterwesen*—Stuttgart, 1835)

Emperors Against Popes

The Crusades were born of the almost perpetual conflict between the Papacy and the German Emperors. It was inevitable that rivalry should break out between these two powers, each of which in the eleventh century considered itself supreme. The Emperors, who did not fail to recognize the spiritual influence of the Church, began to appoint Bishops without consulting the Pope. They even managed actually to get Popes appointed. Their opportunity came because the Church had been weakened by the human frailties of certain of its most prominent members.

But the Church as an institution was to prove that it possessed greater internal strength than the few weak men who had momentarily been at its head. Cardinals elected new Popes. They came from the great monastery of Cluny, whose influence on Christianity was very important. These Popes, men of Godly existence, restored to the Church its former glory, but only found themselves in greater conflict with the Emperors.

Pope Gregory VII was determined to be free of the authority of the State. He proclaimed the spiritual sovereignty of the Papacy throughout the world and preached about St. Augustine's "Kingdom of God on Earth"; *he denied the claims of the German "Holy-Roman" Emperors to world rule in a material sense.* Emperor Henry IV, of the Franconian line of Emperors (ancestors of the Hohenstaufens through maternal lineage), claimed sovereignty by divine right over mankind and the earth. This resulted in bitter conflict, and in 1076 the Pope excommunicated the Emperor, who came in 1077 to humble himself before the Pope at Canossa. But the struggle was soon resumed, and in 1080 Henry IV had Gilbert of Ravenna appointed "anti-Pope," occupied Rome with his troops, installed Gilbert on the Papal throne, and drove out Gregory, who died in exile.

The Crusades are Born

His successor, Urban II, burned with intense spiritual passion. Banished from Rome, he travelled throughout Christian countries as an "apostolic pilgrim," using the full force of his tongue and pen against Gilbert and the Emperor. Gregory had already spoken in vague terms of a mighty armed pilgrimage to reconquer Jerusalem. Now Urban again took up the idea, and in Italy, Normandy, and Provence, preached the cause of "God's Expedition." He felt certain that if he succeeded in launching such a holy campaign under the banner of St. Peter, he would be striking a telling blow at Gilbert and the Emperor, and the prestige of the Church would thus be restored. Slowly the idea took shape, Crusader troops were organized all over Europe, and finally a speech by Urban to the Clermont conclave loosened the human avalanche which set out toward the Holy Land. The First Crusade was born! The triumphal march of this army across Italy was sufficient to drive the anti-Pope from Rome without a struggle, and Urban again had possession of the Lateran Palace.

The prestige of the Emperor suffered a heavy blow. Now that the Pope had regained all his rights, Henry's excommunication was everywhere regarded much more seriously than before. Abandoned by his friends, an outcast, he died in 1106, and was not permitted burial in consecrated ground.

These conflicts left a deep impression on succeeding Germano-Roman Emperors. A more or less open rivalry between Popes and Emperors continued throughout the twelfth century.

Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of the Hohenstaufen family had himself proclaimed "master of the world," *Dominus Mundi*, in 1158 in the fields of Roncaglia during his second campaign in Italy. He also found himself opposed by the Papacy. His struggles with Rome were particularly remem-

bered by his grandson Frederick II* who was greatly to influence the destiny of the Teutonic Knights.

During this time two Knights' Orders, born of the Crusades, were founded in the Holy Land: the *Templars* and the *Hospital Knights of St. John*, both having their seat at Acre in Syria.

Both these orders can from that time on be regarded as *armies of the Pope* the lack of which had previously been a serious shortcoming to the Papacy. *It is therefore not astonishing that the German Emperors should have tried to neutralize these forces. It is quite probable that they were influenced by considerations of this kind when they supported the formation of the purely German-armed Order of the Teutonic Knights.*

Imperial Monks

A skillful manoeuvre: to allow establishment of a Knights' Order, at first of solely religious appearance and with but vague ties to the Empire, so that it would have the consecration by the Pope indispensable to its prestige. It was not until a few years later, when its existence was quite secure, that the Teutonic Order more openly put itself at the service of the Imperial plans for expansion.

Hermann von Salza, Grand Master of the organization from 1210 to 1239, was primarily responsible for the profound impulse of the Order in this direction, and he may be considered its true founder in a political sense. From the time of his accession to power he realized that the Teutonic Knights were, in the Holy Land, in direct competition with the other two older and more respected Knights' Orders. It was therefore preferable for the Teutonic Order to turn toward other lands in order to secure actual conquests. The seat of the

* Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250), not to be confused with Frederick II, King of Prussia (1740-86).

Order remained at Acre, but in 1211 Salza arranged with Andrew II, King of Hungary, to send a detachment of Teutonic knights into the "Burzenland" in the south of Hungary (Transylvania) to combat pagan tribes.

The territory reserved for the Order was clearly defined in a written agreement drawn up between the King and Grand Master. Nevertheless Andrew soon made the complaint that the Knights were widely trespassing beyond the borders outlined for them, that they were coining money without authority, and, finally, had so cleverly manoeuvred at Rome that the Pope had consented to take the territory occupied by them directly under his protection. This allowed the Knights to consider this territory no longer subject to King Andrew. Heinrich von Treitschke, though well disposed toward the Teutonic Knights, founders of the Prussianism he holds dear, states that they acted in Burzenland "*in that spirit of ruthless egotism, fully conscious of its strength, which, from this point on, characterized the statesmanship of the Order.*" Von Treitschke obviously meant this as a compliment, although he describes the Knights as "dangerous friends" for the King of Hungary. The latter in 1225, having early perceived the danger, hastened to expel these "friends" from his country, before they had time to become too powerful. But we can recognize here, from von Treitschke's frank description, the first evidence of certain traits which have survived to this day among the contemporary descendants of the Teutonic Knights.

Following this setback in Hungary, Hermann von Salza sought new lands for the Order to conquer. Frederick II, of the Hohenstaufen family, grandson of Barbarossa, had been Emperor of Germany since 1220, and von Salza was on very good terms with the new Emperor. Frederick II was an extremely curious individual, highly cultured for his day, but with a combination of the most contradictory traits in his personality. He was both adored and hated, and often called

the Antichrist. Hermann von Salza was very devoted to him, frequently acting as his intermediary with the Pope. When in 1226 he discovered a new land, conquest of which might compensate for his humiliating defeat in Hungary, he immediately turned to Frederick II, and placed the campaign he was about to undertake under his patronage.

Hermann von Salza managed to have conveyed to Conrad of Masovia, Christian Duke of Poland, the idea that the Teutonic Knights might give him valuable assistance in his battles against heathen tribes. Among these tribes the Slavic Borussians (Prussians) were most famous. Bishop Christian, a Bernardine monk settled as a missionary within the borders of Borussia, acted as intermediary for the Order. It was he who, believing in the sincerity of the Knights, mentioned them to the Duke. Early in 1226 a formal invitation from Conrad arrived at the Order. Von Salza consulted Frederick II at once and the latter, in his Bull of Rimini, entrusted von Salza with an imperial "mission" for his future campaign.

A Charter for Future Action

This Bull,* which doubtless revealed but a minor part of the agreement between the two men (the part which might safely be made public) was the very basis for all future action of the Teutonic Knights; a permanent charter for all Prussian conquest, and all German political expansion which, during centuries to come and until this day, was to radiate from that territory.

The uncompromising spirit with which the Teutonic Order pursued its aim sprang from the "imperial mission" which was entrusted to the Order in this Bull. This document also clearly defines the ambitions of the Hohenstaufen Emperors as they appear to us as opposed to those of the Papacy. It was this Bull which launched the Order on the path of conquest against

* See complete text of the Bull, page 363.

Slavic countries—but its full scope exceeded by far this particular conquest.

In the Bull of Rimini, the Emperor described himself “by the merciful tenderness of God” head of the Empire “erected before the Kings of the August Earth.” He asserted that God has “extended the limits of our power throughout the various zones of the world.” The reason (or rather the excuse) given to justify this claim was the “preaching of the Gospel.” (The Holy See often violently opposed, in the time of Frederick II as in the time of his predecessors, such claims of the Germano-Roman Emperors to world rule, and refused to admit that the pretext of a religious mission justified such purposes. This is in fact the very origin of the secular conflict between Popes and Emperors, and the reason for excommunication of several Emperors, including Frederick II.) Further Frederick specified that his mission of Empire was directed “*not less to subjugation than to conversion of the people*”; which makes still more apparent a preponderance of imperialistic ambitions. This phrase, moreover, is a clear indication of the methods by which the Order was to carry out the imperial mission entrusted it by the Bull.

The Bull states that in this spirit and by virtue of the invitation of Duke Conrad of Masovia (whom the Emperor calls “*noster Cunradus*,” consequently his vassal) the Teutonic Order is charged with conquering the territory described (intentionally, no doubt) in very vague terms: a land known as the “*Land of Culm*”; another country situated between the borders of the Duke’s land and those of the Prussians (Borussians); and finally the Prussian country itself. Elsewhere the Bull adds that, besides the right of conquest in the territories conceded by the Duke of Masovia and in the Prussian country, the Order shall enjoy “the old and due imperial rights over mountains, plains, rivers, forests and seas” (*velut vetus et debitum ius imperii in montibus, planicie, fluminibus, nemoribus et in mari*).

The Bull further confirms that all territory conquered or received as a gift by the Order shall belong to it entirely, with all the rights and privileges of a sovereign imperial prince, including the right to levy taxes and duties, coin money, exploit all sorts of mines, name judges, impose territorial laws, etc.

German historians of the Teutonic Order note with satisfaction that by this Bull the Order was provided for a long time ahead with a broad plan of action. Indeed the terms of the Bull were so generally drawn that any future activity of the Order, regardless of its nature, would come under the special patronage of the Emperor, and would be supported by him. On the other hand, the Order was henceforth to be bearer of the mission of expansion, which, according to Carolingian tradition, was the very essence of Empire.

“*A Paraphrase of the Real Goals*”

The campaign on the Polish border did not begin until 1231, after long preparation, five years after Frederick II, the Emperor who dreamed of world dominion, had given the Order an impetus which was to keep its full force for many centuries. The Duke of Poland was bitterly to regret inviting the Teutonic Knights into his country. The Bernardine Bishop Christian was to share these regrets at having suggested the idea to Conrad, for later he was kidnapped, imprisoned and cruelly tortured by the Borussians, whom he suspected of acting with the encouragement of the Knights. The cynicism of the Order, which was to remain unchanged over the centuries, was evident here in all its strength. The Knights began the campaign with the firm resolve to keep for their Order exclusively all conquered territory, and to extend their conquests far beyond the lands of Culm and Prussia (where lived the wild Borussians, a heathen Slavic race), their first goal, and object of the agreement with Duke Conrad.

The object of the campaign was to secure more and more

territory for the Order. To succeed in this any means would do, and any excuse was valid for waging war against peaceful neighboring princes, even those who were Christian, if their land were coveted. *In the thirteenth century, the characteristic Prusso-Teutonic methods were already definitely crystallized.*

The avowed aim of the Order was to convert the heathen. This aim alone received the Pope's approval. In the understanding of the Emperor (as illustrated in his Bull) "Subjugation of the heathen" was not less important.

The Emperors, fully aware of the enormous spiritual power of the Church, always found it convenient (even at the time of their most violent conflicts with the Papacy) to maintain this religious front in order to make their imperialistic ambitions appear legitimate. Frederick II, while under excommunication, left for a Crusade to the Holy Land, despite opposition by the Pope, so that he might prove to the world that he was leading the struggle against the heathen. This "struggle against the heathen" was, for the Germano-Roman Emperors, what the "struggle against Jews and Communists" is for Hitler today—a pretext, and a most transparent one.

The German writer Hans Krieg, whom we mentioned before, writing in 1939 (*i.e.*, when the Nazi regime was already in full flower) acknowledges definitely that conversion of the heathen was only a screen and that actually the Order was concerned with increasing the territory of the "Reich." "Conversion of the heathen Prussians was a contemporary paraphrase of the real goals—a paraphrase adapted to those times." Krieg does not attempt to deny the duplicity of such an attitude, without describing it as such, but adds that in view of the "grandiose vision of the whole" pursued by the Order the methods employed did not matter much. Krieg uses a modern expression very familiar to us, when he describes the true mission of the Order: "increase of German living space" ("Lebensraum"). He does not fail to state moreover, with-

out going into detail, that "the Teutonic Order has transmitted this mission as a legacy to the Germany of today."

Frederick Bequeaths His Imperial Ambitions

Emperor Frederick II who, with Hermann von Salza, was responsible for the Teutonic Knights' great adventure into Prussia, was one of the queerest men of the Middle Ages. Son of Henry VI and grandson of Frederick Barbarossa, he felt responsible for carrying out his forefathers' inordinate ambitions. The title "dominus mundi" proudly borne by his grandfather awakened powerful responses in his highly mystical soul. His most ardent desire seems to have been to continue this tradition and maintain it for posterity, and this desire dictated all his acts and decisions.

He finally came to realize that the violent opposition of the Pope would doubtless not permit him to pursue his scheme for imperial expansion and perpetual conquest by direct means. He decided therefore to use the Teutonic Knights by charging the Order with an imperial mission suiting his own purposes. Thus a double advantage was achieved. He succeeded in covering up his real ambitions by having them carried out by a so-called religious Order under the pretext of "converting the heathen." Even the Pope who had excommunicated him could not criticize such activity. Besides in bequeathing his schemes to an Order following strict monastic rules which assured its permanence, he could hope that his intentions would be carried out not only during his lifetime, but in future times as well.

Frederick had had ample opportunity to get a clear idea of the power acquired by the two other Knights' Orders, the Templars and the Knights of St. John. He understood that their strength lay in their rigid organization, the strictness of their rules, and also in what was known as their "secret." The "secret" of religious Orders of the Middle Ages was a power-

ful motive which insured absolute devotion of the members to the purposes pursued. It was not so much the content of this secret which mattered, (although it usually bore, at least symbolically, some relation to the real designs of the Order). What mattered was the very existence of a secret. Men bound by a common secret, subject to the same vow of silence on certain questions, were likely to devote themselves more ardently and with steadier zeal to the common cause, than if they were bound by purely rational obligations, devoid of mystery. Modern society has greatly neglected this helpful factor, so very important in the Middle Ages and ancient times. Frederick II, whose mystical soul divined what he could expect from the closed organization of an Order built on mystic *vows* and a *secret*, firmly intended to use them in carrying out his plans.

Both rules and organization of the Teutonic Order had been copied from those of the Templars. The Templars had a secret (although it is unlikely that its content was as malodorous as certain witnesses claimed during the famous trial instituted against them early in the fourteenth century by Philippe le Bel—the trial which was to end in the annihilation of this Order). Both Templars and Hospitalers, aside from their own leaders recognized only God and the Pope as their masters. Frederick repeatedly found himself in difficulty with both Orders, and especially with the Templars. For his tastes, they were too devoted to the interests of the Papacy, with which he was in constant conflict. He therefore deemed it profitable to do everything possible to fortify the position of the Teutonic Order, on which he could depend ever since his close alliance with Hermann von Salza had been concluded. He knew that the Teutonic Order, apparently a religious Order like the other two Knights' Orders, was much more devoted to him than to the Pope and could be safely considered the faithful heir of his ambitions.

Can these "ambitions," these "intentions," be described as

peculiarly "German"? In the thirteenth century the word had a meaning different from what it has for us. Frederick II was German only on his father's side. His mother was Constance of Sicily, and the education he received in his own youth was much more Sicilian than German. He was a sort of Renaissance figure—*before* the Renaissance. But Frederick, in achieving his imperialistic plans, had met with more difficulties in Italy than in Germany. Although the German princes were often not easy to handle, he still had a greater hold on the German nobles than on the Italian. In view of this, the Teutonic Order, which was an organization of German noblemen, was able to bring him valuable help—especially because of his sincere friendship with the Order's Grand Master. Thenceforth he could consider the Teutonic Knights the dependable force on which he might rely. Because of the instability of imperial power, Frederick had had every reason to strengthen as much as he could the position of the Order. It is because of this that he elevated it to the rank of a State of the Empire—to make it the principal performer of what he considered the imperial task.

In reading the text of the Bull of Rimini, one may wonder whether the Emperor had not wished to grant the Order a certain independence from the Empire. This could be explained by the fact that Frederick had been very uncertain regarding the immediate future of the Empire. One of his sons, Henry, whom he had had appointed "King of Germany," had later revolted against him; Frederick had been obliged to have him thrown into prison, where he died. His other sons did not appear to have much strength or promise. He had therefore no way of knowing what family would occupy the throne of the Empire in future generations.

Frederick must have realized that his own family, and an Empire poorly consolidated, would offer fewer guarantees for continuance of his imperial ambitions than would a rigidly organized Order with which he had spiritual ties. It is not sur-

prising, then, that he should have assigned such an important rôle to the Teutonic Order, both in the Bull of Rimini and by his subsequent aid. He must have experienced a kind of satisfaction in seeing his task pursued by an Order to which he had brought real life by giving it a *raison d'être*. This satisfaction can be compared to that felt by the modern industrialist who bequeaths his concern to his employees. But Frederick II was a mystic (which modern industrialists rarely are), and must therefore have felt a satisfaction all the greater when he thought of the influence he was exerting on the future through the medium of the Order.

Frederick II cannot be considered a "German Nationalist" according to modern terminology. The Germanic racial character of the Teutonic Order charged with execution of his schemes was secondary to the Emperor, cosmopolitan *par excellence*. The Order had been organized according to German racial laws before it became associated with Frederick. These racial laws were likewise class laws, for it was necessary to belong to a noble German family to be admitted to the Order. Frederick had no reason to wish to change the Order's purely "noble German" aspect, for this contributed greater unity to the organism. But aside from such considerations, the problem of German nationalism did not concern the Emperor at all.

In the Bull of Rimini, Frederick describes himself at the beginning and the end as "Emperor of the Romans, King of Jerusalem and of Sicily." He makes no mention of German countries anywhere in the Bull. The continuation of the ancient Roman Empire was part of his mystical vision of life, and purely German traditions meant nothing to him. He longed to be "dominus mundi," Lord of the Earth, for to be a German Emperor seemed to him, under Carolingian tradition, too restricted a task.

The Teutonic Order, while maintaining the German racial organization of its beginnings, concentrated chiefly on per-

petuating the spiritual heritage bequeathed by Frederick II, and developed, from this stock, *its own traditions*. These traditions were necessarily distinct from all other German traditions, and it was inevitable that at some time in later centuries a struggle should arise between the two traditions.

Antichrist?

While still a young man, Frederick had hoped to accomplish the greater part of his colossal ambitions during his own lifetime. Fedor Schneider, in a lecture given at the University of Frankfort (published in the 1930 collection of *Frankfurter Universitaetsreden*) says with regard to this:

"Frederick's program of imperial politics was completely formed by the time he was about twenty. The first objective would be an absolute and thorough centralization of the Kingdom of Sicily, the Norman State of his ancestors. Through the strength thus gained in Sicily he might reconquer Italy (which Barbarossa previously had conquered and lost) acquiring control over more territory even than Barbarossa. Then, using all Italy as a base, the Emperor planned not only to re-establish his imperial authority in Germany, but to strive for world dominion in the spirit of Henry IV."

The plans formed by Frederick in his youth were extremely idealistic. He dreamed of an empire of justice, of world peace. We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of his interest in these objectives. His extremely wide culture helped to make him both visionary and tolerant. He was very active in the study of natural history and contributed considerably to the development of medical science in Italy. In 1224 he founded the University of Naples, and also enlarged the medical school at Salerno. He spoke six languages: Greek, Latin, Italian, German, French and Saracen. He wrote poetry in the most varied and difficult meters. He surrounded himself with poets, scientists and artists. He collected works of art and had a magnifi-

cent library. He was also known for his tolerance towards Mohammedans and Jew.

In his youth he appeared to be a faithful son of the Church. Moreover he owed his election as Emperor to the sponsorship of the Pope. But his faith was not to evolve along very orthodox lines, and he was often accused of scepticism with regard to Church doctrine. He was much interested in astrology and the occult sciences which he had learned from the Saracens in Sicily, the home of his mother. With age he showed more and more independence with respect to the Church, and set a price on his obedience. The conflict became increasingly sharp, and Frederick was finally excommunicated.

Frederick's struggles with the Pope and the Italian cities revived the old conflict between "Guelfs" and "Ghibellines." The Guelfs supported both the Papacy and the idea of freedom. They composed the party of the "Rights of man" of that period: their political doctrines harmonized with the Church's recognition of the sacred character of the human person. The Ghibellines were followers of the Hohenstaufens, who favored strong centralized power—and absolute imperial power. Here the popular Christian ideal struggled against the ideal of an ever-expanding imperialism.

The Guelfs came primarily from among the lesser nobility and the city bourgeoisie, while the Ghibelline idea took root among the high nobility. The Guelfs were named after the German family of Welf. The expression "Ghibelline" is an Italian corruption of the German "Waiblingen," which was the name of a Hohenstaufen castle. Welf I was a powerful noble at the time of Henry IV and received Bavaria from him as a fief. Later, as a result of the rivalry for the imperial throne, fierce hostility developed between the families of Welf and Hohenstaufen. The struggles extended to Italy, where the Hohenstaufens wished to rule with the same absolutism as in Germany. Both families had their ardent champions, recruited from among individuals of opposing schools of thought. The

origin of the rivalry was soon forgotten; but cleavage between the two camps remained, dividing the members according to their opposed mental attitudes. Partisans of Barbarossa and of Frederick II in their struggles against the Popes were recruited, naturally, from among the Ghibellines.

Frederick spent the second part of his life struggling against the Lombard cities and the Papacy. From this time on he changed considerably. The idealism of his youth had departed. From now on he was a hard man who respected nobody and stopped at nothing. His vision of world empire was no longer humanitarian. His sole concern now was the winning of absolute power at any price, in opposition to the Church's claim of spiritual domination over the entire world. It was then that he declared: "From now on I shall be the *hammer*."

His imperialistic ideas, of course, aroused determined opposition from the Church. Until now the Church trusted him, forgetting that this was the grandson of the ambitious Frederick Barbarossa. Traits of Frederick's character, which he inherited from Sicilian forebears on his mother's side, may have been misleading. Sicily was at that time the melting pot of the Mediterranean. There Greeks and Saracens had introduced their highly developed cultural traditions. Frederick's mixed blood is perhaps the very explanation of his contradictory nature. In the second phase of his life all the harshness of the Hohenstaufens characterized him. The description, "Stupor mundi," applied in his youth in an admiring sense, now symbolized the terror which he inspired everywhere.

His biographer, E. Kantorowicz (in *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite—1928**), describes Frederick during this second phase of his life as follows:

"Attila's air surrounded him and he alone could keep on breathing it—just as it was Attila's mission which was now his, and which only he could comprehend. His contemporaries

* The translation is my own from the German original.

instinctively bestowed Attila's title, 'Scourge of the Peoples' and 'Hammer of the World' on him, and his followers no longer referred to him merely as 'he who rules over land and sea,' or 'he who makes the winds to rejoice,' but rather as 'he whose power tramples the mountains and bends them at will.' All Europe suffered terribly under him, both friend and foe alike, Italy and Germany in particular; and to those who did not worship him and were not his followers, Frederick now represented the very epitome of all evil. The capacity for evil possessed by Frederick was indeed rare in a ruler of his stature . . . nor has anyone taken greater pleasure in doing evil. Where the State was concerned he had always been capable of any cruelty, treachery, violence, cunning, deceit, harshness—of any outrageous behavior. 'I have never reared a pig whose fat I would not eat' was one of his expressions. But where previously he had committed evil for the sake of the State, now it was for its possible effect in the world struggle which went on around his person; and he alone had come to be the State. Where previously the needs of the State constituted right, now it was the Emperor's personal needs. What he required at the moment and what might be useful as a weapon were now considered right . . . and where, in the past, laws had been bent to the interests of the State and the world at large, they were now bent to suit imperial caprice. The theory that the welfare of the Empire, of other Kings and nations, and of those who believed in him depended on his personal weal or woe—was frequently proclaimed. Every act and move of his now seemed more tyrannical, more violent, more monstrous and in fact more ruthless, since it was useful only in the preservation of a single individual."

Kantorowicz gives the following description of the effect produced by Frederick on the minds of his contemporaries:

"The entire life of Frederick II can be interpreted in the Messianic as well as the Antichrist spirit. It was the common belief that the Antichrist begotten in sin, would be surrounded

by magicians and wizards, astrologers and sorcerers . . . and he would restore demon worship: he would strive for personal fame and would call himself God Almighty. He would come to Jerusalem and install his throne in the Temple . . . he would restore the ruins of the Temple of Solomon and then, lying, claim to be the son of the Almighty. At first he would convert the Kings and Princes, and through them, later, the people. He would dispatch his couriers and preachers to all parts of the world, and his preaching, as well as his power, would reach from sea to sea, from east to west and from north to south. With him, however, the Roman Empire would come to an end. And he would accomplish signs and wonders and unheard-of deeds—but unprecedented confusion would reign over the Earth. For when his deeds were witnessed, even the perfect ones and God's chosen would doubt whether he were Christ—who, according to the Scriptures, will come again at the end of the world—or whether he were the Antichrist. They would look like one another. . . .

"And Frederick's behavior always allowed for double interpretation. In his display of the exotic splendor of both his court and his menagerie, he might be considered by some as a universal King ruling over all peoples and races—men and beasts—as the Messiah, under whose scepter all animals shall lie down together in peace . . . while others might have seen, in this galloping procession of pards and owls and dark-skinned Corybantes, sweeping through Italian cities, the very Hosts of the Apocalypse."

Frederick II liked to trace his behavior to his grandfather, Frederick Barbarossa. It is quite possible that the legends attached to the latter largely influenced the dreams of his grandson. Frederick II maintained for example that the Teutonic Knights had been founded by Barbarossa, a claim which seems to have no justification in fact. In the popular mind the legends inspired by Frederick's death fused with those which centered about his grandfather at an earlier time. When Fred-

erick II died, people did not believe it: had it not been said that the Emperor would live to the age of 267 years? For almost a century after his death impostors pretended to be Frederick. In Italy it was said that he was not dead, but that he had retired inside Mount Aetna. A Franciscan monk told of having been deep in prayer along the edge of the sea, when he noticed a company of several horsemen disappearing with their mounts among flames into the water. One of these riders said to him: "It is Emperor Frederick who is leading his Knights into Aetna." The German legend mentions Mount Kyffhäuser as the refuge of Frederick and says that he will live there until he returns to lead his people. It was assumed that this refers to Frederick Barbarossa. It is probable that the story was told originally about Frederick II, and that this is one of those confusions of personalities which is common in all folklore.

The mysticism of Frederick II, allied with that of Hermann von Salza, was behind the vast and daring imperial mission which had been assigned to the Order of the Teutonic Knights. Frederick bequeathed it all of his incontinent ambitions and all of his utilitarian ruthlessness. The Emperor's word, "I have never reared a pig whose fat I would not eat," could have been the motto of the Order. Like its spiritual ancestor, it too was to become "Hammer of the World" and "Scourge of the Peoples." And the description of Frederick II,—"what he required at the moment and what might be useful as a weapon were now considered right,"—can equally and unreservedly be applied to the Order.

It was Frederick II who instructed the Order in the strict methods used by the Normans of Sicily in organizing the State. The Order's entire set-up of Knight-officials, which was to be the basis of the severe Prussian official system, sprang from there.

In transmitting to the Order all the conceptions deriving from the second phase of his life, Frederick II was careful not

to bequeath to it any of the ideas and principles of his youth, which were marked by humanitarianism and tolerance.

Conversion as a Pretext

The conversion and oppression of the Borussians by the Teutonic Knights were carried on by fire and sword. These Borussians were a savage people who knew how to make themselves feared, but the Knights opposed them with all their Teutonic harshness, the arrogance of their caste and the fanaticism derived from their monastic origins—fanaticism strengthened by severe rules and regulations inspired by those of the Templar Order.* A cruel campaign followed in which the Borussians were unable to resist the superior forces of the Order. By 1260 almost the entire territory of the Borussians had passed into the hands of the Order. Hermann von Salza died in 1239 and Frederick II in 1250, but their deaths did not change the course of events. The future paths of the Knights were all clearly defined; now, subjected to the strictest discipline, they unswervingly pursued their task of conquest.

The methods used by the Knights from the beginning of their campaign were severely criticized by contemporary chroniclers, most of whom were themselves German. This criticism was also taken up by the German clergy established in various sections of the Borussian territory, as well as the German missionaries belonging to non-armed orders. All of these deluged Rome with petitions complaining bitterly about the cruel and hypocritical behavior of the Teutonic Order. One of their complaints was that the Knights had made absolutely no effort to convert the conquered peoples. On the contrary, the Order hindered such conversion because as long as the heathen remained heathen, they could be considered as slaves: the Knights could exploit them at will, entirely for their own ends.

* See page 231 for more details.

Modern German authors have no illusions as to the true ends pursued by the Order. The "contemporary paraphrase of the real goals" acknowledged by Hans Krieg is accepted by most German historians. Dr. Bruno Schumacher, in a work published in 1927 (*Der Staat des deutschen Ordens in Preussen*) described as follows the basic ideas governing the foundation of the Order's State:

"The first colonization of this land, cities used as military bases, and great land-grants made to people eligible for Knight service, seem to have been dictated primarily by military considerations. This all became changed by 1283, when the conquest was complete. Only now did the idea of a National State begin to take shape. A vigorous and systematic colonization of the land by German peasants was effected. At the same time this network of cities was extended—no longer for defense needs only but also for administrative purposes. . . . But the completion of this founding of a State was realized only with the acquisition of Pomerania-Minor. This Vistula land, which for a long time had been within the range of East German colonization, was acquired by dint of the greatest diplomatic skill, with the definite intention of using it as a connecting link to Germany. In this, there is not much of the spirit of the Crusades to be discerned, but what does stand out strikingly is the foresighted political activity in the tradition of Hermann von Salza."

August von Kotzebue, the famous German writer, did extensive research among the archives of the Order at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and published his findings in 1811, under the title, *Preussens aeltere Geschichte*. He claimed that he could find no evidence that these peculiar armed monks, the Knights, had ever attempted to preach the Christian religion. "They wanted to conquer a *land*, not a people; establish dominion and not the teachings of Jesus. In this they took advantage of Europe's 'holy madness'."

The "holy madness" of this period was the "struggle against

the heathen." As already pointed out, with minor differences the Teutonic methods of the thirteenth and twentieth centuries are identical. The slogan of "conversion of the heathen" used by the Teutonic Knights assured them sympathy in different parts of the Christian world, despite the abuses of which they were accused by respectable people. It also allowed them considerably to expand their forces through the constant influx of young warriors coming from all German countries. Actually it now became fashionable to participate in this crusade into the Borussian country—as it had formerly been to depart for the Holy Land at the behest of the Pope. In this, Frederick II and the shades of his ancestors who had survived in the Order's traditions won the advantage over the Pope.

Although formally a *religious* order, the Teutonic Order pursued its own ends in accordance with the spirit of its *imperial* mission. And it went further. Having taken over the aims toward an *imperium mundi* of Frederick II and the Germano-Roman emperors, the Order might be considered, following Frederick's death, much more the spiritual successor to the limitless ambitions of this strange man and his predecessors than was the German Empire itself. The latter from now on lost much of its brilliance, and appeared in a less threatening light.

Frederick II had been the last great Germano-Roman Emperor, and the Hohenstaufen line died out with his son, who reigned but a few years. The German Emperors who followed them descended from other families. They did not continue these Carolingian ambitions, and not one claimed the name of "dominus mundi." The Order therefore regarded itself thenceforth not only as bearer, but also as *sole heir* of that mission which it had been assigned by the Germano-Roman Emperors. And while the Christian spirit of "Leben und leben lassen" ("live and let live") was becoming widespread throughout the rest of Germany, the Order pursued its aims of perpetual

conquest with egocentric ruthlessness, and later bequeathed them to the Prussian State.

The Gratitude of the Order

The Order extended its territory deeper and deeper into the Slav country until the fifteenth century.

Those "Prussians" (Borussians) who did not submit were cruelly slaughtered. The "collaborationists" of this period were more or less safe, but in order to gain the favor of their conquerors, they were forced to give up their native language. Finally their descendants intermingled with the conquerors. The Germanized Borussian nobility now married among the German "beggar-noblemen" (Betteljunker) who had settled in the countries of the Order in the wake of the Knights. Together they were to form the *Prussian Junker caste*, which has been referred to frequently.

For the purpose of constantly extending their territory, the Knights, on the flimsiest of pretexts, waged successive wars against all their neighbors, who, for the most part, were Christian: the Lithuanians, the Samaites, the Esthonians, the Russians, the Pomeranians, the Krivitzians, and above all the Poles. After Prussia, Pomerania-Minor was taken over, but the Order's conquests did not halt at this point. The Order did not, moreover, intend to stop at any point. The tentacles of the Teutonic squid reached out ever further with insatiable avidity. In the course of centuries the whole territory thus conquered became known as Prussia.

Kotzebue, reliable historian of the Knights, described their intrigues in provoking war against the heroic Swantopolk, Christian Duke of Pomerania, so that they might seize his country. Swantopolk had rendered the Order great services. The Knights were never impressed by such considerations, when the expansion of their territory was involved. The Order, using to advantage the weak character of the Duke's

brother, and sowing discord between the two brothers, procured for itself an ally in the very country it planned to conquer. Thus, the Order excited the rage of the Duke, and through a series of incidents provoked a war with him—which was valuable in carrying forward their aims for conquest. Kotzebue relates that Swantopolk was under no illusions where the friendship he might expect from the Order was concerned:

"He could already foresee his future fate, observing that of the unfortunate Prussians [Borussians]. He knew that the Knights would never lack a pretext, a Papal Bull or an imperial sanction when, after having successfully subjugated the heathen, their insatiable lust might be attracted to the lands of the Pomeranian sovereign. Realizing this, he found it both prudent and just to support the Prussians: prudent because their still unbroken power afforded him security; just, because the Order, in oppressing the Prussians, violated agreements of which he was the Trustee.

"Swantopolk was the son of Mestwin, Duke of Pomerania. The dying father entrusted Swantopolk with the guardianship of his younger brother, Sambor, and made Sambor swear to obey Swantopolk. The harmony between the two brothers was destroyed by the Order's intrigues.

"The Christian Order," says Kotzebue, "knowing neither shame nor gratitude, provoked and armed brothers against one another, thus rewarding the unsuspecting Duke, who had welcomed and supported them with noble confidence. For it was Swantopolk's bravery alone that had saved the Germans from destruction on the banks of the Sirgune in 1233. For five years he remained their confederate (1238); would not make peace with the heathen without the Order's consent; even subjected himself to the Papal anathema rather than be unfaithful to them. He remained silent even when they befriended his enemies—the Poles.

"But when the Order, disregarding the duties and oaths it

had taken, now reduced the unfortunate Prussians to a state of sorage, the latter, their arms enchained, turned to Swantopolk, the trustee of their compact. He now felt that to remain silent any longer would be criminal (1239). But he did not yield hastily to an unruly desire for war; rather he wanted first of all to try everything to awaken a spirit of justice and humanity in the Order instead of shedding blood. In outspoken fashion, and in a manner befitting a brave man and a mighty sovereign, he presented himself before the 'Landmeister' (regional master) of the Knights as a spokesman for the oppressed. But the Landmeister, aloof and excitable, accused the noble spokesman of being a traitor and of stirring up the populace. Swantopolk, although angered, was above these personal insults and was guided simply by the interests of his followers. Even now he would not draw the sword; he was determined to exhaust every peaceful and legal means so that some day the curse and responsibility for having started a war would fall directly on the heads of the Knights. . . . It was only when Sambor, the obdurate brother, built the citadel of Gordin (with aid from the Order) and turned it over to Swantopolk's enemies for their assemblies that Swantopolk drew the sword—not for conquest, but moved only by prudence and by human sympathy for the sufferings of the Prussians.

"The arrogant Knights had the impression that his only followers would be the Prussian masses, because the nobility had frequently caroused with them. But these nobles too, now become sober, recognized the new danger. They were still being handled with consideration, but what might they expect after their people were thoroughly enslaved? For a long time their indignation had mounted when they saw how underserving Germans were appointed to the principal offices and received large estates. They were no longer to be lured by revelry. They too were called to arms by the wails of the oppressed."

A long war ensued, terminating in the conquest of Pomerania by the Order.

The methods used against Swantopolk are characteristic of the Teutonic Knights' behavior over a period of centuries. Pretexrs were always found to provoke war against those princes whose lands they coveted. If such pretexrs did not exist they managed to create them, so that responsibility for the ensuing conflict would always be placed on their adversaries.

The Mania of Conquest

Kotzebue describes the infernal urge toward perpetual conquest in this manner:

". . . that shameful depravity, referred to where the humble are concerned as greed, and, where the mighty, as the spirit of conquest: considered—in the first case—with universal contempt; in the second with admiration by the petty . . . if that scourge of humanity spurs on some individual sovereign, it cannot take from the oppressed at least one comforting hope: that some day even the conqueror must die. But once this mania takes possession of an organism which never dies (because, in place of decaying extremities, it constantly shoots forth new ones) the ground, put to fire by its mania, becomes eternal Hell. Such a monstrosity was the German Order! In vain did a few of its Grand Masters desire peace and justice; they were but as the healthy head of a diseased body; a body whose poison spread ever farther and farther. Those who willingly accept some conquering Duke as their neighbor certainly regret it, but to a lesser degree than those fools who accepted the conquering Order on their borders."

The Teutonic Grand Masters had originally imposed a rigid discipline among the brothers of the Order, setting up a strict and exacting administration. The latter was run by means of a body of Knight-officials, whose organization had been inspired by the Normano-Sicilian officials of Frederick

II. (This traditional severity, aggressiveness and intolerance of the Knight officials was carried over later in a direct line to the administration of the Prussian Kingdom.)

Despite this inner severity and partly, perhaps, because of it, all sorts of abuses arose in the countries of the Order. The treatment to which the Knights subjected the conquered people was, from the very beginning, most inhuman and led quite frequently to their severe condemnation by the Holy See, which at times went so far as to place them under ban.

Already in 1258 Pope Gregory IX had written: "The heathens were oppressed by no yoke before their darkness was illuminated by the torch of faith; yet despite this, the Brothers dare to steal the property and the freedom of those who are no longer sons of Ishmael but who have been redeemed through the blood of Christ. If they do not desist, they shall be deprived of their privileges and removed from the occupancy of the lands they have so abused."

Kotzebue describes as follows the oppression of the Krivitzians by the Order:

"What fate was in store for the enslaved remnants of the once mighty Krivitz people? Where were their rulers, their nobles, their free-holders? What status, what rights and religion, what property would be theirs? They were treated in various manners by the victors. Prisoners, men, women and children, with no hope of clemency, were forced to submit to cruel bondage. The fact that they renounced *Perkuna*,* crossed themselves and sprinkled holy water on their heads, did not help them at all. It is true that the Order had taken the position in 1249 that all men are free and equal and that only unbelief leads to enslavement. Now, however, they managed to break their word through the vile pretext that only those who, of their own will, welcomed the cross and the beam on their shoulders might enjoy such privileges; but those who

* The heathen god the Krivitzians worshipped.

have been forced into the fold of the Church at the point of a sword must forever, and in slavery, atone for their past unbelief.

"Less miserable was the fate of those princes and nobles who had curried favor with the Order by betraying their fatherland. These were granted estates which in many cases had belonged to them anyhow and which could not very well be stolen from those who, of their own free will, submitted. But where once they had been unrestrained masters of their estates, they now obtained as a special grant whatever greater or lesser jurisdiction they might have over their serfs and also the right—for both men and women—to inherit. For all this they were obliged to pledge themselves for Knightly service. If they were able to adjust themselves obediently under this new yoke, if they helped to draw the net even tighter around their own brothers, then the Order might occasionally condescend to give the rank of 'noble' to the nobles; to decorate the heroes with a Knight's sword; and in place of the traditional respectful title, 'Pan,' ('Sir') to bestow on them the empty title, 'Miles.' Whether they were also Christians was of no concern to these armor-clad missionaries."

Trickery

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Gedemin, Lithuanian Prince, addressed himself to the Pope, demanding his protection against the Order. Kotzebue says that his letter shows up the "black spirit" of the Order:

"Gedemin wanted to become a Christian. The pious Knights attempted to hinder this, because for their own purposes of potential conquest, they would rather have his lands remain heathen territory. Through royal grants Gedemin invited all sorts of immigrants, artists, artisans and farmers to resettle in Lithuania. To the Order this seemed a very serious matter. It appeared to them a plundering of their own States, which

had become depopulated through unholy wars. Who would come to Prussia in the future, they concluded—with reason—and there submit to their excesses, if these people had been promised by a powerful ruler peaceful shelter, protection, justice and liberty? To hinder this, the Knights had to utilize every means and practice every evil, if necessary. They had before disrespectfully broken the seal of the Grand Duke. Now they did not hesitate to intercept his letters, none of which, save those to Rome, ever reached their destinations. So that posterity might some day recognize their cunning and give them credit for their knavish trickery, they were imprudent enough to file these letters in their archives instead of destroying them. As it is, these letters, after 600 years, are so many irrefutable witnesses against the Knights.

“In order to block the only secure road leading to Lithuania, they spread slanderous rumors to the effect that Masovia had been cruelly razed by Gedemin. Actually, Gedemin’s letter described Duke Boleslas of Masovia as his only friend, through whose country one might safely travel in the pilgrimage to Lithuania. The difficulty with which letters were forwarded at this time made this knavery possible; and their slander even found its way into history. Such a circumstance appears less surprising when one takes into account the great number of lies officially set in motion, unhindered because no one dares to deny them—this even in our own times, despite all the means at our disposal for disseminating truth.

“Thus is posterity deceived.

“The letters addressed to the Pope were not intercepted by the Order, either because they did not dare to do so, or because their bearers escaped the Knights’ vigilance. That the pagan Grand Duke, rather than the Pope’s own warriors, sons of the Church and Knights of the Blessed Virgin, received the protection of the Holy Father, is the best indication of how contemptible was the Order’s behavior. Despite the mask it wore so carefully, it can be evaluated in its true light.”

“Justice Was a Stranger in Prussia”

The Knights’ abuses continued, even against the German secular clergy, and against the monks of various orders. The Teutonic Brothers forced them out of their churches. They imprisoned and poisoned Bishops. The peaceful German bourgeoisie who lived in the seaside towns and in the cities of the interior—where their ancestors had come in great numbers as artisans, at the invitation of the Order—also had plenty of cause to complain bitterly of the Order’s corruption and immorality. Fierce battles were waged at various times and notably in the fifteenth century, between the Order and the German city bourgeoisie, who organized in a *Bund* against the Knights. The bourgeoisie accused the Knights of crimes of all sorts. The most fundamental rights were denied them by the Order, which was functioning as a theocracy, with absolute power. Expropriation and other material usurpation were common. Owners of land coveted by the Order were thrown into prison. Their wives and daughters were seduced by members of the Order, who did not take their own vows of chastity too seriously. H. Bauer (in *Schwert im Osten*, 1932) writes: “In accordance with the original regulations of the Order, it was forbidden for a Knight to kiss even his mother or sister, but a common saying in Prussia now advised the head of the house to keep his back door locked against the Crusaders.”

Kotzebue found a vast amount of evidence in the archives of the Order which permitted him to establish the extent of the abuses committed. This is what he has to say concerning the morals of the Teutonic Knights in the fourteenth century:

“Robbery and murder were every-day occurrences in Prussia, particularly on the borders, along whose reaches cries and complaints could be heard ceaselessly. In countries of the Order, some of the best known Knights were to be seen robbing and ravishing in broad daylight. In Pomerania, despite

the orders of the Grand Master to the contrary, they behaved in the same fashion. Some of the Superiors of the Order were themselves powerful robbers who would spare none of their neighbors. When complaints reached the ears of the Grand Master, his answer was invariably: 'We don't know anything about it' or 'We are really sorry.' Help was always slow in coming. Even in foreign countries, the Brothers transformed their official strongholds into robber castles, from which the friendly neighboring princes were regularly attacked.

"Contempt for divine service; neglect of pious rituals; profaning sacred ground; insulting official couriers; lust and raping of young girls—these were some of the most common occurrences. Thieves escaped punishment because of their respected kinfolk. Adulterers became bolder; in Marienburg* the Order tolerated a public brothel."

"We Are the Law"

Documents dating from 1436, as noted by Kotzebue, further confirm the continuance of this deplorable state of affairs.

"Enraged by the prevailing disorder, the pious monk, Heinrich Boringer of the Order of Carthausen, wrote to the Grand Master: 'Iniquitous administrators and judges hold the power in the land, selling justice at a price; oppressing the poor because their superiors are neglectful and no longer punish them. From the poor they have taken the tools and implements of work, through which wives and children must be fed. The sweat of the poor has been spent.—Noble Master, with much virtue and wisdom did you write three years ago, that every complainant shall appear before you, so that you may

* In 1291, the three Knights' Orders were routed from Acre, in the Holy Land, by the Arabs. The Teutonic Knights transferred their seat to Venice at first and later to Marienburg in Prussia. From this time on they made themselves at home in a land belonging to them. This contributed considerably to their independence from the Church.

correct all abuses. At this even the infernal devil was frightened. Woe to him who would have hindered you. But today it is only to Heaven above that the miserable can cry; your sheep have been entrusted to wolves. When God shall finally demand his reckoning from you, I shall not cry out as did St. John: "Woe is me!—for I have remained silent." All these things are well known but they have been carefully hidden and but few take them to heart. The heathen kings were much more virtuous than the present-day Christian rulers. Holy laws are scorned by these rulers, even though they themselves are men of the Church. And concerning the common law of their subjects they jeer, saying: "*What* laws of Culm? *We* are your laws." Representatives of the oppressed, who dare to speak up, are threatened with the dungeon.

"Particularly in the villages, and with full knowledge of the Knights, the behavior of the foresters, overseers and compeers has been thoroughly vicious on many occasions. Local judges are appointed who are forced to oppress the poor, and for this they are rewarded by being seated at the communion table of the Knights. Judges have revealed at confession that they were forced to render unjust decisions. When someone has been injured or killed while at work, these greedy Knights extort such enormous fines from the responsible party that he can no longer compensate his victim or his family. Nor do they tolerate friendly settlements; even where petty amounts are involved, one is forced, unwillingly, to institute suit. They buy grain at low prices during the winter and force the original vendor to repurchase it at a much higher price in the spring. Whoever complains to the Master is thrown into chains and often dispossessed from his home. Oppression and drudgery are intensified from one year to the next. And this, they claim, is for the good of the country! They [*i.e.*, the officials of the Order], when their larders are full, retire from their duties. When these "rulers" appoint an overseer, they

do not, from that moment on, pay him anything, but tell him: "Feed yourself from your position." O Lord, how the poor people suffer then!

"They carouse with women—they do as they please, the Master rarely questioning them. While the priests sing in Church, the Knights run riot in the taverns. No one wants to remain in the Abbey. They would much rather find themselves an office elsewhere—in the wilderness if necessary—as far removed from the Abbey as possible—so that they may go their evil ways without anybody disturbing them. The Prussians still cling to their heathen idolatry, but no one is concerned about this. They are conscripted for work duty on Holy days—the Knights, blinded by their avarice, desire only to rule and exploit them, not to teach or convert them. Their freedom has been stolen. They are supposed to be Christians, but all Christian rights have been denied them. When a serf who has no son dies, his lands fall to the manor; that is why the lands lie waste. No promise to the people is kept, and sworn oaths are but a mere trifle. Sometimes good regulations will last for half a year, but then they are trampled by the rulers. Usury, perjury and adultery are commonplace, but they are no longer considered sinful since the Knights themselves behave in the same way. At weddings and at carnivals during Lent, the most fiendish behavior is witnessed. Murder occurs frequently, since a man's life here is worth less than a horse's. It does not upset the rulers because they can extort fines out of this. The cause for all this is in the nightly debauchery in the taverns—and more and more taverns are being licensed to make possible collection of the cursed taxes. Sharp gambling prevails both among the higher Knights and their subordinates.

"May the Lord and you be prevailed on: even the priests have to lead a life more mundane than religious; they must farm their own fields and pay tithes. Quod non tollit Christus, tollit fiscus. What they exact from priests helps to gorge mer-

cenaries. Whatever the Knights leave over may be taken by their valets, only it would be preferable if they were not so uncivil in this. To sum up, this is no Christian country, since God's commandments are followed less by the Knights than they are by the Prussians."

As a conclusion, the complaining monk swears that he has told the open and honest truth, that he has composed his letter in the privacy of his home, and has revealed its contents to no one.

"Friends of the Order," says Kotzebue, "tried in vain to explain away these serious charges levelled at the organization, as exaggerated and pre-fabricated lies. But it is not the chroniclers alone who support the charges. Authenticated facts speak here. The Comthur* of Tauchel, to satisfy his unnatural lust, had a nine-year-old girl carried off by his servant. When her parents complained, this poor violated girl was sent home. When she was grown older, the girl was married to a local mayor, bearing him a son and living with him in peaceful wedlock for sixteen years. When her husband died, the Order seized her property on the vile pretext that her marriage had been illegal, since she had at one time lain with the servant of the Comthur.

"Even peasant women working in the open fields could not be certain of their honor—their very life. They were frequently dragged off to the woods, where after being lustfully defiled, they were left to hang by their feet.

"Freemen were tricked out of evidence of loans given by them, and this was immediately destroyed. Furthermore the victims had to suffer violence and were driven out of their homes. Money was extorted from the rich by threats but the victims dared not lament this before wife and child, and dared even less to complain to the Grand Master. When two men quarrelled and a third attempted to reconcile them in friendly

* Local and regional commanders of the Teutonic Knights were referred to as "Comthur" or "Komtur."

manner, the mediator would be punished by the Order's officials because he was depriving the tribunal of a welcome fine.

"Without a hearing, without a conviction, many had to accept corporal and financial punishment. A peasant passing by a window and seeing through it a Brother's bed-companion, would pay dearly if he dared to make a humorous remark. If one of these Knights of the Blessed Virgin succeeded in seducing an honorable woman, he would openly boast of his conquest, and of the woman's consent. Handsome wives were torn away from their husbands and locked up in castles. Daughters of wealthy burghers, already engaged to worthy journeymen, would be forced into marriage to protégés of the Order, against their own and their parents' wills. Complaints by the parents or the fiancé would lead to imprisonment, and often their lips would be sealed in death. A burgher could no longer travel in safety to the annual fair, now that the Brothers themselves had become tradesmen: they bought or extorted goods at half their value; transported them by boat elsewhere; returned with expensive commodities obtained in exchange, not bothering to pay the vessel's owner and crew, and throwing those who demanded payment into the dungeon.

"Bloody street battles were common occurrences. If a burgher was injured, that was considered fitting. Should he be the victor, however, he would be forced to flee the country."

"We Are God's Creatures"

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the rugged Samaites addressed their complaints to the Pope and the King of Rome, pleading for protection in these words:

"Hear, hear, ye princes, spiritual and temporal! Receive charitably the propositions of the afflicted, listen to the cry of the oppressed. We are of free, noble descent and the Order wishes to deprive us of our inherited rights. It has not tried to win our souls for the true God; it has only tried to win for

itself our lands and our inheritances. We are obliged to beg, steal, rob and kill in order to preserve our sorry lives.

"How do they dare call themselves Brothers? How can they baptize? He who is to wash others must first be clean himself. To be sure, the Prussians are baptized, but they know as little of the true faith as they did before. When the Brothers invade foreign lands they send the Prussians before them, to shed human blood. These Prussians need no urging; they burn churches, carry on worse than Turks; and the worse their behavior, the more pleased is the Order. For this reason we have refused to be baptized—we do not wish to become like the Prussians.

"The evil began with us slowly, but it grows daily. The Brothers have taken all our fruit and beehives from us; have set the yoke of degrading work upon our necks which once were free; have laid intolerable burdens on our servants, serfs, peasants, and tenants; have taken our hunting and fishing away, and have forbidden us to trade with neighboring countries.

"Hardest of all to bear was the fact that they carried off our children each year as hostages; but not being satisfied after taking away 200 such children, showing no human compassion, they dragged our wives away from us.

"We plead with you—hear us! hear, you who love justice! We would sooner weep than talk. They have bound the most powerful among us in chains and taken them to Prussia as serfs; some they have burned with their wives for refusing to part with their children. These men of the Cross have abducted our sisters and young daughters by force and—we say it with bitter sorrow—have defiled them; this is manifest and we can prove it. For a man named Kircutis, one of the mightiest boyars of our land, had a very beautiful daughter, whom these same Brothers maliciously abducted. The girl's brother could not endure this, and when he was obliged to see how one of the Order violated his sister, he ran him through with his sword. A great and noble boyar named Wyssygynn, along

with his wife and children, were dragged to Prussia where all were killed. They burned the boyar Swolken's house and village and killed the inhabitants; he himself barely escaped. But another, Sungalo, they beheaded, and forced his whole family into slavery.

"Hear, you Christian princes! We have nothing to look forward to but death by murder and that their swords will become red with our blood. They have postponed our baptisms, have built no churches in our country and have appointed no priests. Only the noble princes Witold and Jagello have, in friendly manner, instructed some of our people in the Christian faith. Take pity on us! We beg to be baptized. But remember that we are human beings, not dumb beasts which are given away, bought and sold; we are God's creatures whom He formed in His image and in the freedom of the children of God; and this freedom we want to preserve and use. Therefore, we pray to our heavenly Father that he receive us through the Polish bishops, into the bosom of the Church. For we wish to be baptized, but not with blood."*

Prussia and the "New Germany"

Even Treitschke—although he still finds inspiration for his neo-Prussian zeal in the history of early Prussia—must acknowledge:

"The non-Germanic people are prevented from receiving an education. Balthasar Ruessow complains that, of a thousand peasants, hardly one can repeat the Lord's Prayer by heart. The children scream and dogs slink away when a German enters the smoke-filled hut of the Esthonian. In the clear nights of the short but hot summer, these miserable people sit under the birch, the favorite tree of their dull poetry, and sing stealthily a song of hatred for these German wolves: 'You

* As quoted by Kotzebue.

Germans—swell yourselves up before all peoples of the world; nothing we poor Esthonians do suits you; therefore down with you to deepest Hell.' For centuries such hatred on the part of the vassals and such severity on the part of the masters continued; only during the period of Russian rule did the German nobility decide to free the peasants from these yokes which tied them to the land."

But Treitschke adds, without seeming to condemn such behavior: "*By these examples we can estimate the significance of the Germanization of Old Prussia.*"

This sentence characterizes, moreover, the entire attitude of the Prussian historical school on the subject of cruelty inflicted, or abuses committed in any epoch of Prussian history. These writers adopt a nonchalant manner; and are not concerned with moral considerations. They insinuate that the sort of behavior for which the ancestors of present-day Prussianism are criticized should be considered perfectly legitimate, in the past as well as the future; for such behavior can be explained as a sort of "Spartan harshness" which is indispensable to the welfare of the Order, or to the welfare of its successor, the State. It would not have been proper for these Knights to become weakened in the pursuit of their fixed aims by such idle considerations as charity, fairness, gratitude or humanity.

In discussing the revolt of the oppressed Borussians (around 1260) who, for some ten years, seemed to have been triumphant, Treitschke says:

"After ten years, during which the German domination over the Borussians was almost destroyed, the days of victory again came to the Order through the determined efforts of Landmarshal Konrad von Thierberg . . . and during the next ten years, the supremacy of the Germans was established through death and destruction. . . . Having once learned their lesson from this dreadful experience, the Order was

henceforth to adopt a new and harsher policy towards those whom they subjugated."

The "dreadful experience" to which Treitschke refers was the almost complete destruction of German domination. To prevent recurrence of this, which Treitschke considers the worst of all eventualities, a "harsh policy" seemed indispensable. This was, perhaps, regrettable, but what could one do if there was no other way out?

"Having previously been extolled as the propagator—as the rock—of Christian faith and as an instrument of Peace, Prussia has now become worthy of the name of the New Germany," says Treitschke (Note that Treitschke thus designates the Order's State of 1260.) Actually, Treitschke might better have said that the Teutonic Order, having until then been successful in camouflaging itself as a Christian Order, was henceforth obliged, under the pressure of events, to show its true face, and to proceed with all the ruthlessness and selfishness inherent in its basic principles—the principles with which it had been endowed by Frederick II and Hermann von Salza. In this manner, it was in future centuries to become what Treitschke, writing in 1886, has designated as the "New Germany"—which name it still bears as part of its present-day mask.

The greater part of the Order's political innovations and attitudes have survived until our time.

Eventually the Borussians of the thirteenth century dared to revolt against their "masters." "The Prussians [Borussians] had forfeited all their rights through revolt," says Treitschke. "Peace treaties with the conquered were now a thing of the past; in their place came subjugation and the imposition of terms dictated entirely by the degree of guilt and by military considerations. The majority of Prussian nobles were reduced to a state of serfdom but the German peasants and those Prussians who had remained faithful, including the serfs, enjoyed

great privileges. The Order had entire townships resettled in regions where they might be less threatening. Just as the entire Order's State appears to us as a later-day 'March' * in the Carolingian tradition so the duties it imposed on the conquered served the highest purposes of the State . . ."

Of the German philosophers and theoreticians of the nineteenth century who were referred to in the first chapter, some produced what were apparently original ideas. Others cited Machiavelli for justification. But actually all these ideas can be clearly discerned three centuries before Machiavelli in the activities of the Teutonic Knights of the thirteenth century. And this last quotation from Treitschke which describes the basic methods of the Teutonic Knights is like a blueprint for present-day Hitlerian conquest.

The Junker Caste

We shall not go into details concerning the formation of the Prussian State by the Teutonic Knights, nor the ups and downs of the wars which they conducted. We are simply concerned here with showing the origins and evolution of that spirit which characterized the Pan-Prussians of the nineteenth century and of the beginning of the twentieth century—the spirit which still characterizes the Germany of today, regardless of the names by which it has been called.

But the tradition we are discussing here does not belong exclusively to the realm of ideas. We are also facing a powerful combination of actual economic interests established, in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries among the followers of the Knights, and which may be traced right down to our time. Behind its front, which has been changed frequently in the course of centuries, this combination of interests represented *an important motive force for keeping alive*

* "Mark" in German.

those ideas of grandeur of the State and devotion to it which have been propagated in Prussia from the times of the Knights down to the present.

The Knights benefited—personally and as an Order—more than all others in the conquest of Prussian territory. But thousands of nobles soon came from various sections of Germany and settled near the Knights. We can consider these nobles the second most favored of all the groups which gained by the conquest. They were for the most part adventurers lured by profits to these lands where a Crusader was granted every liberty. Here these sons of noblemen—whether they had not yet come into their inheritances, or had squandered them recklessly—might hope to make their fortunes in short order. For some years they served in the armies of the Order without actually taking the Order's vows. Then, thanks to the connections they had made in the Order, they were able to seize estates owned by Borussians or by other native people. They used the whip on the native peasants to compel the cultivation of their lands and treated them as slaves.

These adventurers arrived in the Borussian territory without possessions, practically beggars. They were called the "Betteljunker" (beggar squires).

Still others were in the group surrounding the Order. There were former members of the Order who had deserted it to marry. There were brothers and cousins of affluent Knights who came to settle where they might profit by their close connections. Then, too, many of the Borussian nobility, now Germanized and ready to accept the most humiliating conditions in order to save their estates, allied themselves with the Betteljunkers during the three centuries referred to above*—which were the "Golden Age" of the Teutonic Order. All these groups intermarried and formed thousands of intermingling ties among themselves, to protect through the com-

* Thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

plicity of the Order the privileges by which all of them profited. It is the descendants of these groups—the Betteljunkers, the defrocked Knight-friars, the relatives of the Knights, and the Germanized Borussians—who later formed the caste of Prussian Junkers which was to have so great an influence on the affairs of Germany down to our time.

From the monastic austerity of the Order stemmed what became known later as "Prussian discipline." Despite this austerity, rigorously imposed wherever relations between Knights or the Order's interests were concerned, an extraordinary laxity of morals prevailed among the Knights in Prussia. The behavior of the Landjunkers, who were not directly under monastic discipline, was largely responsible for the abuses flourishing in the Order's State. This contradictory situation, Spartan discipline intermingled with flagrant abuse, reflected the lasting alliance between representatives of two ideas of life to the advantage of each. It was to remain characteristic of Prussia until the present, and more recently (since 1870), of Germany dominated by Prussia.

In a work published in 1904 (*Geschichte des deutschen Ordens*) the German writer, Carl Lampens, characterizes as follows the behavior of these ancestors of the Junkers:

"Instead of treating the natives with Christian love, the Order permitted the tyranny of the Landjunkers, as well as that of their own local regents in the newly conquered lands. In a town where the populace had reverted to heathenism, one of these regents, Hermann von Altenburg, had the village exits locked, and slowly burned to death all the inhabitants. . . . The Landjunkers wanted to live only at the expense of the natives, whom they intended to make their personal slaves. When we realize how these Junkers carry on today, in those very provinces, we can well imagine what it must have been like at that time, when there was no opposition press, nor an opposition parliamentary group which

might defend the rights of the oppressed." This was written in 1904 when there were, we may say, *per interim*, an opposition press and parliamentary group in Prussia.

The Borussian Strain

Attempts have often been made to determine whether or not the Borussian heritage runs deep in the blood of present-day Prussians, and particularly the Junker Prussians. It would be no easier to gauge exactly the ethnic contribution of the Borussians to the present-day Prussian group than to evaluate, for example, the precise contribution of the Saxon, as compared with the Norman, to the English of the twentieth century. But we do not need precise, statistical figures to form a general idea of the result of the mingling of Teutonic with Slavic elements in the Prussians.

Despite strict monastic rule over the inner life of the Order, the Knights, in their outside behavior, more nearly resembled the barbaric Teutons of Tacitus than the founders of the Church which preached Charity: pre-Christian elements survived among both the Teutonic Knights and those who surrounded them—the ancestors of the Junkers. The examples set daily by the savage Borussians to the Germans and the marriages between the German Junkers and the Borussian Christian proselytes (who never really understood the moral teachings of the Church) emphasized pre-Christian traits in the Prussianism born of this curious fusion. If we bear in mind that their descent from these pre-Christian or, if we prefer, "barbarous" ancestors is relatively recent, we can better understand the peculiar behavior of the twentieth-century Junkers—for example the cruel methods of the Fehme in the period after the first World War. Only six centuries have passed since Borussian wives were obliged to render absolute obedience to their husbands, failing which they were burned alive. Lampens tells of the following inci-

dent which occurred during the wars between the Knights and Borussians:

"The High Priest invoked the Gods; whereupon the Holy Oracle of Romowe promised the heathens victory, on condition that a German Christian woman offer of her own free will to be burned in sacrifice—a tribute to their Gods. The heathens actually found such a woman who, after becoming satiate with all the pleasures of debauchery, climbed up on the funeral pyre. And now the Prussians arose in their united strength."

The immediate descendants of these Borussians married the daughters of the Betteljunkers and contributed to the formation of a caste which may in many respects be considered a survival of the darkest Middle Ages. The primitive virtues of these uncivilized people were destroyed, but their traditions of cruelty merged, by a sort of osmosis, with the harshness and arrogance of the German Knights. Kotzebue says about this:

"All the moral practices and customs of these people, including, unfortunately, its virtues, were later to suffer various mutations, because they were unhappily fused with the superstition and blasphemy of the German Christians. . . . They believed in evil spirits, who would drive the possessed to jump into the water and flames. Along the Baltic seacoast, men fishing for amber would be harassed by ghosts on horseback. Sorcerers carried on their weird business. Pagan rites were still being celebrated in the black of night. The churches remained empty."

The "Two" Germanies

The pure virtues of the city bourgeoisie and their strict adherence to the principles of Christian morality were in curious contrast to the very peculiar moral conceptions of the Teutonic Knights and their entourage. Already, at this point,

we can distinguish between "good" and "bad" Germany, but the latter had not yet achieved the preponderance it was to assume in the future. Korzebue says the following on this subject:

"To the shame of the noble monks, the bourgeoisie remained firm in their morality and order. In the cities, schools were flourishing. Each guild complied with the laws, which assured them peace, decency and virtue. No one could come armed to morning services. While merry-making, 'none must behave in a manner disgraceful to the sight or sound' on penalty of one pound of wax. 'None shall lack respect for the aged, nor shall one offend his neighbor by calling him by an evil name.' They had already formed a club at this time known as the *Companye*, whose rules, if broken in word or deed, imposed a fine on the violator of one barrel of honey. Similar fines were levied on drunkards. Only after vesper bells had rung would gatherings be permitted, and taverns had to be shut at nine o'clock. No carnivals or fairs except during Shrovetide; women to visit their suitors only during certain limited hours; journeymen not to be allowed time off on the morning following a Feast Day.

"And thus Prussia offered the curious spectacle wherein the immorality of the leaders did not corrupt their subjects and where integrity had fled from the Knight's castle to the burgher's cottage."

This opposition between two contradictory approaches to life was the same in all sections of Germany, where the Teutonic Knights, reaching out from their Prussian fief, had succeeded in establishing a local command in the principal cities. The Order was everywhere detested by the bourgeoisie, and conflicts were frequent. Contrast between them was not confined to the differences in their personal standards but included their social behavior as well. The bourgeoisie could not forgive the numerous broken promises of the Order and others of its acts—inspired alternately by cynicism and hypocrisy—

which were striking affronts to their own understanding of good and evil.

Here we see before us two contradictory Germanic developments which occurred independently of one another until the middle of the nineteenth century. The one, characterizing the greater part of Germany, was essentially Christian, and formed part of what we call "Western civilization." The other, proceeding in a direct line from the ambitious Germano-Roman emperors, was localized in Prussia. Representatives of the latter tendency recognized no rights but their own, and regarded with great disdain the cooperative, altruistic spirit prevailing in other German States. They described this spirit as the result of "degeneration" and patiently awaited the moment when they could annihilate it in their domination over the rest of Germany. The moment was to come under Bismarck.

The Assassinations of Danzig

The assassination by the Order of the burgomasters of Danzig in 1411 was an event long recalled by the city bourgeoisie. Following the battle of 1410, in which the Knights had suffered the most crushing defeat in their history at the hands of the Poles, the Chief Burgomaster of Danzig, Konrad Lezkau, disguised as a Polish beggar, succeeded in passing through the Polish lines. He managed to warn the Margrave of Brandenburg and other German princes, who hurriedly dispatched considerable reinforcements to the Knights. In the Order's tradition gratitude befitted only the weak; so the Knights imposed heavy taxes and restrictions on the city of Danzig, and when their erstwhile benefactor, Konrad Lezkau, protested bitterly against such behavior, the full rage of the local Comthur was unleashed against him. Upset and unhappy at such a state of affairs, Konrad and the city councillors tried to appease the Knights and a solemn reconciliation took place

before the church altar, where both the councillors and the Comthur of the Order promised to forget their differences and to live in peace with one another in the future.

Pretending to celebrate this reconciliation, the Comthur invited Konrad and his colleagues to a great banquet to be given in their honor at the Knights' castle on Palm Sunday. Lezkau, two other burgomasters, and a councillor accepted the invitation. On their way to the castle they met the Comthur's jester, who said to them jokingly: "If you knew what they were cooking, you might not come to eat." One of Lezkau's colleagues was frightened at these words and returned home. The others, under the exhortations of the worthy Konrad, whose honest soul could never suspect the villainy of the Knights, entered the castle and were immediately seized. Brought before the Comthur and his Knights, violent insults assailed them from all sides, but they had the courage to keep calm. Thereupon the Comthur summoned the hangman of Elbing, a neighboring city, and ordered him to execute the three prisoners. The hangman refused, saying that it was not his custom to execute men unless there were legally constituted judgments. He was severely whipped for his insolence and the Knights decided to do this work themselves, and first celebrated their decision in drink for several hours. The prisoners were then brought in. The Knights "leaped at them like mad dogs" (say the chroniclers) and killed them with knives and swords. Lezkau suffered ten wounds and his throat was cut, while one of his colleagues suffered sixteen wounds, and the third seventeen.

For several days thereafter the Order tried to keep secret what had happened, and they even had their guards accept the daily provisions brought each day by the wives of the three men. The wives were told what foods their husbands supposedly would like to eat on the following day, so that they might bring it. Finally, in response to the demands of the municipality, protesting against the Order's right to with-

hold their leaders arbitrarily, the Comthur had the bodies of the three burgomasters thrown in front of the castle gates. The citizenry, speechless with sorrow, brought back the bodies and buried them.

One might think that the Grand Master, having learned of these events, would perhaps have decided to punish the Danzig Knights, so that the Order might not be identified with such procedures. He did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, the wives and children of the assassinated burgomasters were driven from the city, and all their goods were confiscated.

From Order to Duchy

In the fifteenth century occurred the events which weakened the Teutonic Order and finally led to the creation of the Prussian secular State.

In order to defend themselves against the abuses and autocracy of the Order, the bourgeoisie in the Prussian cities formed a protective "Bund" in 1438, which was named the "Marienwerder Bund," for the site of the place where the organization was formed. The spirit of decency and cooperation was rising against the principles of exploitation and narrow egoism. In the German cities, the Hansa's traditions were in full flower. This league of merchant cities, the Hansa, found both its function and its prosperity in the exchange, rather than the usurpation of other people's goods. United, the members of the Bund considered themselves sufficiently strong to oppose the Order—this vulture which terrorized them.

At first the Bund protested simply against the exactions of the Order. But in 1453 the Emperor upheld the Knights, and severely reprimanded the Bund. The latter, enraged, declared war against the Order in 1454. The Knights trembled, knowing very well the strength of the cities. The fortified "burgs" of the Knights, those detested strongholds which had been

dominating the cities from their outskirts, soon fell, one by one, into the hands of the revolting bourgeoisie. At the end of a few weeks the latter had seized fifty-six of these burgs. The war lasted for thirteen years and claimed heavy casualties on both sides. The cities asked assistance of the King of Poland, whom they invited to extend his reign over Prussia—"this country originally evolved from the 'crown of Poland.'" The burghers who, for the most part, were German-speaking, made this request because they were convinced that all their misfortunes dated from the time of the Knights' reign over their country, and that the Polish kings would show much greater respect for their rights and traditions.

The Knights finally realized that they could no longer continue the struggle. Their army, which had totaled 71,000 men at the beginning of the war, had now decreased to 1700 men. The peace treaty that was signed at Thorn in 1466 represented a complete defeat for the Order. The countries of Culm, Michellau and Pomerania-Minor, with their principal cities of Thorn, Danzig, Elbing, Marienburg and the bishopric of Ermeland, came under Polish rule. The Order was allowed to retain the rest of its territory, but the Grand Master, as a "Duke of Poland," was now obliged to yield to the King. Half the officials of the Order, in the lands under its administration, would from now on be Poles. The cities were to be protected, and it was forbidden for the Order to burden them with any new laws or taxes. Following the signing of the treaty, the Grand Master humbled himself on bended knee before King Casimir. The latter quickly helped him to his feet, tears in his eyes.

The only German prince who had aided the Order was the Margrave of Brandenburg, Frederick von Hohenzollern.*

* The Hohenzollerns, natives of Swabia (which was part of Bavaria), were the "Burgraves" (local rulers) of Nuremberg. In 1411 they were raised to the rank of Margrave of Brandenburg by Emperor Sigismund in exchange for a loan of 100,000 Hungarian florins, a loan greatly appreciated by the Emperor, who was constantly in need of money.

The Margrave and the Order had concluded an unusual pact, promising to give mutual aid to one another against the subjects of each. It was the Margrave who, in 1466, acting in the name of the Order, negotiated the peace with the King of Poland for the Knights.

Relations between the Order and the Hohenzollerns were now excellent. It is understandable then, that the Knights considered it useful in 1511 to elect Albert of Hohenzollern and Brandenburg to the dignity of Grand Master of the Order, which post he filled with full understanding of the Order's traditions and aims.

Nevertheless, it was Albert who was responsible for the secularization of the Order's State. Actually the Teutonic Knights for some time now had been much more a *caste* controlling a *State*, than a Monk's Order serving religious ends. The Knight-officials were most influential, and directed everything for the benefit of the Order, of themselves, and of the Junkers, with whom they were united by bonds of kinship, friendship and complicity. A very small minority of the Knights were still faithful to the religious traditions, but they had no influence on the Order. Albert did nothing but give official status to an existing condition, when in 1525 he transformed the Order's State into the hereditary Duchy of Prussia (with approval of the King of Poland, who remained suzerain of the Duchy as he had been of the Order's State).

The occasion for this act was the Reformation, the ideas of which Albert allowed to penetrate deeply into the Order. This had curious consequences, for it was possible for some time to witness the strange spectacle of an Order of Monks, of whom some were Catholic but the majority Lutheran; an Order having two initiation rituals with slight differences between them—one for the Catholic Brothers and the other for the Lutheran disciples. In reality there was nothing astonishing in this evolution, for, as we have seen, the allegedly

religious Order had been *German* above all from the very time of its origin. Its function had never been spiritual, but was inspired exclusively by imperialistic purposes.

A "Hospital" for German Nobility

The transformation from the Order's State to Duchy did not at all change the internal organization of the State. The former Knights retained their positions, but from now on it was possible for them to marry legally. Thus they found themselves on the same level as their allies, the Junkers. The few remaining Knights who were still faithful to the traditions of a closed and monastic Order emigrated to Mergentheim, there to continue as a living anachronism shorn of every purpose and function. Finally in 1809, Napoleon dissolved this phantom Order,* but he did not shatter the forces of the true Teutonic Order, which, secularized and hiding behind a variety of masks, survived in the Prussian State.

All sorts of organizations served as disguises. Secret societies had been functioning in the shadow of the Teutonic Order. The Junkers were not directly subject to rules of the Order. They had found it useful to form bonds among themselves, under protection of which they could further their own interests and pursue ends similar to those of the Order. As far back as 1397 there had been created a secret Junker society known as the "Society of Lizards"—*Eidechsenengesellschaft*—a name whose symbolic significance may have been that its members' intention was to creep in among the fissures of the Order's State. Certain Grand Masters tolerated these activities while others were more strict, as much toward the members of the Order as toward the Junkers, their accomplices. Lampens, lenient toward the Order and speaking from a distinctly German point of view, comments as follows on the

* It continued its existence in Austria and was officially reestablished in Prussia at the end of the nineteenth century by Wilhelm II.

Eidechsenengesellschaft (*Geschichte des deutschen Ordens*, 1904):

"The Landjunkers, in their inconsiderate exploitation of the peasantry, faced constant obstacles from the officers of the Order. Now a section of the Landjunkers formed an apparently harmless but actually most treacherous association—the Eidechsenengesellschaft—claiming, as it is often said today, that its purpose was 'the protection of their own interests!' According to the secret rules of this Association the Landjunkers were to support patriotic German interests only if this were to their own advantage. And already at that time they found their advantage only in the ruin of the rest of humanity. The entire country existed for them alone, to be exploited and abused by them."

Kotzebue claims that the "Society of Lizards" eventually became the real cause of the replacement of the Order by the Prussian State. . . . "Their foundation charter referred to the Grand Masters with respect and gave no hint that they would challenge the authority of the latter. Nevertheless they showed no hesitation later in declaring that if justice were denied them they would take self-protective measures. And so even at this time, the seed had developed which after half a century was to push the strong roots of the 'Order-Oak' out from the blood-soaked earth."

The Order was eliminated from Prussia by the Junkers because the Junkers wanted to monopolize the supreme power of the State for their own advantage. When the Grand Master, Albert von Hohenzollern, transformed the Order's State into a Duchy he was acting most probably, under the influence of this Society of Lizards. The Junkers had imagined, and correctly, that they could have a more direct hold on the affairs of a political State than on those of a closed Order. The strictness of the Order had often proved an annoying obstacle to outside influences, even those as powerful as the Junkers. From favored servants, they became lord and master almost

overnight. Henceforth they could say, as Louis XIV: "I am the State". If this State, by virtue of an ancient tradition, was destined to carry forward a world mission, they intended to execute this mission—since they themselves were now to be the beneficiaries of all advantages.

The Order itself had among its secret aims that of serving as a "Hospital" for German nobility. We have seen that the Order of the Teutonic Knights was founded originally for the purpose of creating a *hospital* for the German crusaders in the Holy Land. The Knights used the term "Hospital" in a symbolic sense (another example of the symbolism common in the Middle Ages) and concealed behind it one of the aims of the Order—"conspiracy to promote the interests of a caste." This aspect of the Order definitely existed along with the imperialistic aspects so clearly defined in the Bull of Rimini, the true Charter of the Order. Kotzebue relates that when the Grand Master begged for the help of the Margrave of Brandenburg, the former reminded him "that the Order had always been a Hospital for the German nobility." "The most apt one-word description," adds Kotzebue, "which could possibly define this unnatural organization—the Order."

From the time of its founding, the Order had a "secret" or "secrets." These secrets are mentioned frequently, and in the rules of the Grand Master Konrad von Ehrlichshausen, it is clearly stated that "the Order's secrets must never be revealed before laymen or before the servants." This cannot be a reference to the Order's statutes as they were known to every one. The "secrets," then, can concern only a more detailed statement of the aims of expansion and conquest than was originally contained in the intentionally vague Bull of Rimini; or they might be related to the aim of protecting, in the Order's capacity as a hospital, the caste interests of the German nobility. This latter aim was recognized but cleverly masked in the official name of the Order: "Order of the German Brothers of the Hospital of Jerusalem." Only with this

double purpose of the Order in mind can we understand all of the Order's attitudes and methods, frequently contradictory, as well as those of Prussia, and of Germany dominated by Prussia, at a later time.

It is this *double motive* which explains the pursuit in a most ruthless manner of a mad plan for imperialism by the impersonal entity which was the Order and which today is the State. This "general interest" shouldered out all private interests except where the interests of the German nobility were concerned—or rather of those German nobles who in the course of centuries had come to form the caste of Prussian Junkers. Their welfare was the supreme yet rarely acknowledged goal of the Order.

The same double purpose which was pursued centuries ago by the Order is carried on today by the Junker organizations. The "secrets" were the same in the thirteenth as in the twentieth century.

C. J. Weber, in a work published in 1835 (*Das Ritterwesen*) which we mentioned before is surprised that the partisans of the Order were capable of describing it as a "National Institute for the Nobility." This is the natural surprise of the enlightened man who, in the face of evidence, does not dare to believe that atavistic morality still exists. On one occasion when the Order was severely criticized, this name, "the National Institute for the Nobility," was cited as an argument in its defense. Weber says of this, "It is almost comical. . . . Would it not be shameful for an enlightened nation which knows its rights (I am dreaming here of the Germans as a nation) to tolerate such a National Institute for the Nobility? And would this not be a discrimination against other citizens of the State?"

That was precisely the case.

CHAPTER III

PRUSSIA COMES UP IN THE WORLD

THE KNIGHT OFFICIALS, the real leaders of the Teutonic Order, maintained their positions. The Junkers preserved their privileges. The secret societies* undertook the task of keeping alive the mysticism and the "conspirational" aspect of the Order. It may therefore be said that all the traditions of the Teutonic Knights fully survived in the Duchy, and later in the Kingdom of Prussia.

The family branch of Duke Albert died out in 1618. The Prussian heritage passed to another Hohenzollern, the Elector of Brandenburg, who was henceforth to rule over both countries. He was, as Margrave of Brandenburg, under the Emperor, and as Duke of Prussia, a vassal to the King of Poland. But the Electors who followed were much more concerned with being rulers of Prussia than of Brandenburg.

The Order's Traditions Survive in Diplomacy and Warfare

These electors no doubt wished to take advantage of the numerous traditions of the Order which had survived in Prussia as well as of the unique tie-up of interests between the Junker organizations and the caste of officials. They felt that they might carry out much more ambitious plans than if they built their reign around the dull heritage of Brandenburg, whose history was hardly different and no more interesting than that of most of the other German principalities.

* We shall see at work the many subordinate organizations which these secret societies found it useful to create in the period 1918-1933.

Frederick William I, who was named the "Great Elector," contributed a great deal to the maintenance and development of this Prusso-Teutonic tradition. H. Bauer (in *Schwert im Osten*, 1932) comments on this with characteristic enthusiasm: "In the creation of the Brandenburg-Prussian State by the Great Elector Frederick William I, the State concept which had existed in the old Order's State was revived. The moral strength of the officialdom and of the army of the Order was given new life. Under Frederick the Sword in the East was raised in the old Prussian spirit of hardness, obedience and duty—the Sword through which the Reich (the age-old dream of all Germans) would be created anew."

During the wars between Poland and Sweden, the Great Elector, alternately siding with each of these countries, manoeuvred with a duplicity so ingenious that he finally succeeded in having the complete independence of the Duchy of Prussia recognized by both countries. Later, under his son, Frederick, Brandenburg and the Duchy were transformed into the "Kingdom of Prussia." Frederick chose this latter name because as sovereign of Brandenburg he would have been vassal of the Emperor. But at the same time, by calling himself "King of Prussia," he showed his intention of remaining faithful to Prussian traditions. His sovereignty for this reason received the support of the powerful ruling class composed of Prussian officials, descendants of the Knights and affiliates of the Junkers.

His son Frederick II, named Frederick the Great, increased the power of Prussia through aggressive wars, thus preserving cherished old-Prussian principles. He attributed these wars in his personal memoirs simply to ambition. All the wars fought by the great Elector and Frederick the Great were wars of their own choice, as von Bernhardi stated in words previously quoted: "Of all the wars through which he [Frederick II] led his people, not one was forced upon him." These men acted for the sole purpose of constantly extending the power

of the Prussian State—just as the activities of the Grand Masters had been devoted solely to continuous expansion of the territory of the Order's State. Both were supported by the same feudal privileged class, whose modes of living had varied little during the course of centuries.

No German Unity Without Junker Hegemony

The wave of revolution which swept Europe in 1848 was directed at these privileges, among other things, and also at the abuses for which they had been responsible. The Junkers passed a few uneasy hours. But the upheaval was unsuccessful, in that it did not reach the true root of the evil. In an enthusiastic but somewhat naïve spirit, the revolutionaries asked Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, to assume leadership of their movement and to accept the imperial crown. The King, flattered by the offer, at first agreed; but soon "other influences made themselves felt," and he declined the proposal. The high officials, the Junker Prussians and their allies in the armed forces* had vetoed this proposition.

This action might seem surprising on the part of a group which so strongly desired the aggrandizement of Prussia. As proven by later events, their aim was Prussian hegemony over the Reich as the first stage toward a more far-reaching hegemony. Yet, apparently, they did not wish to seize the opportunity offered them in 1848, whereby they might have united the various German states under the rule of the King of Prussia.

The reason for this is simple: the "Pan-Prussians" knew that such unification as was possible at that time would be risky, since it would have been based on ideas much too democratic. Under such conditions there was absolutely no guarantee that their feudal privileges (which for them came before

* The latter—the officers' corps—was composed of descendants of the same caste as the first two groups, and preserved all military traditions of the Order.

the interests of the State) would be preserved. The creed of the powerful "Society of Lizards" was still strong: "Patriotic interests are to be supported only where they are to the interest of the Junkers." The Junkers preferred to wait until the unification of the Reich could be achieved on terms favorable to themselves: *i.e.*, through complete seizure of power over all other German states by the Prusso-Teutonic clique. Bismarck, Wilhelm II to a certain extent, and finally Hitler were to achieve this task as the Prusso-Teutonics had conceived it.

Carl Schurz, the German patriot of 1848, who later became a great political figure in America, described in his memoirs* the forces influencing the King of Prussia in 1848:

"There was the landed aristocracy, the 'Junker' element, whose feudal privileges were theoretically denied by the revolutionary spirit and practically invaded by the legislative action of the representatives of the people, and who artfully goaded the King's pride. There was the old bureaucracy, the power of which had been broken by the revolution, although its personnel had but little been changed, and which sought to recover its former sway. There was the 'old Prussian' spirit which resented any national aspirations that might encroach upon the importance and self-appreciation of specific Prussiandom, and which still had strength in the country immediately surrounding Berlin [†] and in some of the eastern provinces. All these forces, which in a general term were popularly called 'the reaction,' worked together to divert the King from the course he had ostensibly taken immediately after the revolution of March, with the hope of using him for the largest possible restoration of the old order of things—well knowing that if they controlled him, they would, through him, control the army and then with it a tremendous, perhaps decisive force in the conflicts to come."

* *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, The McClure Co., New York, 1907.

† Potsdam, in the suburbs of Berlin, was the seat of Prusso-Teutonic influence on the affairs of the State.

The projects for German unification in accordance with the democratic plan of 1848-49 also met strong resistance from Bismarck, who throughout his entire career had been a faithful servant to the Prussian interests: "I believe that if we withhold our support from these projects it will be easier for Prussia to bring about German unity in the manner already pointed out by the government. If it came to the worst, however, I would rather that Prussia should remain Prussia, than see my king lower himself so far as to become the vassal of Messrs. Simon and Schaffrath's [democratic leaders of that time] political associates. In her own character, she will always be in a position to give laws to Germany instead of receiving them from others."

It is this, actually, with which the Prussian clique is concerned: to impose *its own laws* on the rest of Germany, and we know exactly what is meant by these "laws."

In 1849, Bismarck made a speech on the same question: "What has hitherto kept us going has just been our specific Prussianism, the remains of the heretical old-fashioned Prussianism which has survived the Revolution, *i.e.*, the Prussian army and exchequer, fruits of intelligent Prussian administration, and the vigorous interchangeable activity that connects King and People in Prussia. . . . The people, whose truest representative is that very army, does not desire to see its Prussian kingdom melt away in the putrid fermentation of South German insubordination.* Its loyalty is not attached to a proper Board of Directors of the Empire or to the sixth part of a Council of Princes, but to its living and free king

* The expression "people" employed by Bismarck in his discourse is actually a euphemism—designating that mass of Landjunks who alone opposed realization of the democratic plan of 1848, rather than the true people, who had supported this plan. When he speaks of the "Prussian army," he obviously refers to the body of officers who, in their entirety, stem from the Junker class. As for the spirit of "South German insubordination," which he vigorously opposes, this is, in reality, the Christian and humanitarian spirit, respecting the "rights of man" which Bismarck and the Junkers considered contrary to Teutonic traditions.

of Prussia, the heir of his ancestors. . . . We all wish that the Prussian Eagle should spread its wings, alike protecting and ruling, from the Memel to the Donnersberg; but we want to see him free—not fettered by a new Ratisbon Parliament, or supported on the pinions of those levelling hedgeclippers at Frankfort. Prussians we are, and Prussians we will remain; and I hope to God that we shall continue to do so long after this scrap of paper will be forgotten as though it were a withered autumn leaf."

The Teutonic Devil

In thus declaring himself for "Prussian" principles, and opposing those principles which might be called "German," Bismarck supports a particular type of Germany, discriminating against the other. The "Prussianism" to which he declares himself faithful (which as a nationality has had a much shorter past than the German) is none other than the tradition of the Order, which has survived—a Teutonic tradition of everlasting expansion, supported by a privileged caste. In distinction to this is found the other tradition of the industrious city-bourgeoisie, of the peaceful principalities and of the spirit of cooperation of the Hanseatic League. In a moment of sincerity Bismarck wrote to one of his friends: "I have sold my soul to the Teutonic Devil" (so reports Moritz Busch, his literary factotum, who was very devoted to him*). It is this very "Teutonic Devil" to whom all the "German grandeur" theoreticians of the nineteenth century sold their soul. Because this Teutonic Devil was the same as the Prussian Devil, they all, regardless of their own origins, came to consider Prussia as the only country, the only power capable of realizing their dreams.

Moritz Busch devotes much time to proving that although

* Moritz Busch, *Bismarck*, translated by William Beatty-Kingston, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1891.

Bismarck was born a Junker, had the Junker manners, and was the political ally of the Junkers, he was nevertheless not the Junker prototype. Busch had been very close to Bismarck, and it is likely he wished to present his hero in the light in which the latter preferred to appear. His thesis to a certain extent is valid. Bismarck throughout his career was sincerely devoted to the Prussian monarchy. The latter, despite its alliances with the Junkers, despite similarity of goals and methods, despite the origin of both from the Order, had finally evolved its own goals and traditions within the framework of this common background. (This commonly happens to institutions created to serve the interests of others. When these institutions acquire an independent existence, they end by developing their own traditions and aims, still preserving those which lay behind their origins. The Teutonic Order itself, having carried on the ambitions of Emperor Frederick II toward *imperium mundi*, ended by endowing these ambitions with a more complex meaning. And the same appears to be true if we compare the Prussian-Junker organizations with the true Teutonic Order.) The Prussian monarchy was a servile instrument for the Prussian Junkers, and as such represented a most opportune façade for this group; but at the same time it had its own existence and evidently cannot be considered absolutely identical with the latter.*

Busch, to whom one may refer without being accused of having preconceived ideas against Bismarck, says this of his idol:

"He is descended from an ancient family of country nobles,

* Just so, in 1918, the monarchy, because of its rôle as façade, had to bear the entire responsibility for the débâcle. Because this monarchy existed as a separate entity, it was possible to suppress it without actually affecting the forces which hid behind it. Suppression of the monarchy seemed to be remedy enough. The Prussian Junkers (with their affiliations in the army, among the officials and, since the creation and development of German industry—among heavy industry as well) were a much more dangerous group than had been their *front* organization—the monarchy; and they were thus able to maintain their position. They could do so because their activities and their secret organizations escaped general attention.

inhabiting the Marches, which has supplied to the Prussian kings a goodly number of 'Junkers,' all of whom became officers in the army, not a few dying the death on the battlefield, under Frederick the Great and during the War of Emancipation, for Honor and their Country. When he had grown up to early manhood, the 'Junkerish' attributes above alluded to—arrogance, high temper and *brusquerie*—were strongly developed in him; the least objectionable of them, however, were the most salient. As a student, he was notorious for a spicy tongue and a ready sword; the older citizens of Goettingen still bear his wild tricks in mind."

The description of Junker manners in the character of the young Bismarck corresponds trait for trait with the traditional prototype of the Teutonic Knights, the ancestors of the Junkers.

Busch has a few apologetic passages here on the subject of the Junker connections and attitudes of Bismarck: "The Chancellor was a Junker; he lived a Junker's life for a considerable time, and to some extent represented the views of his fellow-Junkers. As a Minister, however, he belonged to the party designated by the epithet 'Junkerdom' only to the extent that, like itself, he was a Royalist in thought and feeling, and, above all, objected to Parliamentary government. . . . If he were styled 'soldier' instead of 'Junker'—if his militarism were grumbled at instead of his Junkerdom—there would be some sense in such a view of his character, although it would be no reproach to him. What is spoken of as militarism is in reality that Prussian discipline by virtue of which all the forces in the State, all the members of the governmental organism in its various branches, work together with one common object—that system, the first principle of which for all connected with it (from the lowest to the highest in rank, including the Sovereign) is obedience, or rather the subordination of each individual's personal inclinations and opinions to those of his immediate official Superior in particu-

lar, and to the interests of the State in general.* Every part of this system is an accurate fit, dovetailing admirably with the part adjoining it; all goes on smoothly, as in the army, which is merely the most marked outcome of the spirit animating all our State institutions and officials, besides being the chief and central school in which that spirit is imparted to the population at large.

“Such a system as this—of which Bismarck himself once said: ‘I am ambitious to deserve one day the praise bestowed by history upon Prussian discipline’—is quite compatible with an abundant measure of political liberty, but not with the Parliamentary form of government demanded by our Liberals . . . Bismarck is the incorporate ideal of the Prussian officer and official, not of the Prussian Junker. Nothing short of stupidity or dishonesty can account for any man mistaking him in this respect. Future generations will not be guilty of such folly or wickedness.

Busch here seems to be raising an issue over words. For if we restrict the use of the expression “Junker” to that class of Prussian “country-squires” living in their Middle Age paradise, Bismarck, although springing from this very class, far surpassed them in scope and daring. Busch says that in the final analysis Bismarck should be considered basically as a Prussian officer or official. However we know that these Prussian officers and officials are sons and grandsons of the same Prussian “country-squires,” or that they are descended from other officers and officials whose families, since the time of the Order, had been closely allied with the Landjunktens. Considering all this, we are justified in saying that all these elements really formed one great caste—regardless of whether we call it Junker or not. Because he was more intelligent than the class he represented, because he had travelled abroad, Bis-

* The adherence by Bismarck and the entire Prussian school to the principle of *obedience*, to the *interests of the State* and to *Prussian discipline*, is, as we have seen, the product of a long tradition stemming from the Teutonic Order.

marck became more “civilized” and developed a much broader outlook than his associates. That is why he might have appeared, at times, to be deviating from his original course. This was not so, for Bismarck until the end of his career continued to serve the forces which had descended directly from the Teutonic Order, always with the same devotion and ruthlessness: he simply used a little more tact in his actions than did his masters.

Busch’s division of the Prussian ruling class into army officers, officials and Junkers goes back, under different names, to the time of the Order. The Prussian army officers were formerly Teutonic Knights serving the Order by the sword. The Prussian officials had previously been “Officials of the Order.” Lastly the Junkers were descended in a direct line from those friends and relatives of the Knights who had come to Prussia as no more than Betteljunktens, and who had seized the lands with the complicity of the Knights, at the same time absorbing the remnants of the Germanized Borussian nobility. It is this Trinity—holy only to those individuals participating in it—which for centuries has been the keystone of Prussian affairs, and which has also become the keystone of Germany, since the time the “Reich” became equivalent to “Greater Prussia.”

This tripartite caste was no vague entity, but was well organized. Its tactics and direction were determined by the secret societies we have discussed. The Junkers, Prussian “country-squires,” played a dominant rôle within this group.

They were concerned with preserving the advantages derived from rights which permitted them to exploit their land and men by methods used in the Middle Ages. Because they maintained great unity among themselves, they were in a position to exercise much influence behind the scenes in all questions of political significance, and to make their opinions respected during all periods of Prussian history. Their aims did not differ much from those of the army officers and officials

who remained their faithful allies, but because they were better organized than the others and financially more independent, they were at all times more influential in the affairs of the State. Further, the Junkers were concerned with the interests of the State only so long as they could maintain it as a servile instrument in their own hands.

The Prussian army officers and civic officials, many of whom were related to Junkers (a fact which contributed to greater interdependence of the three groups), loyally carried out the Junkers' intentions. A sort of "local patriotism" masked private interests: these interests were, for the Junkers, the *raison d'être* for this association. As for the officers and officials, the State had symbolically taken the place of the Order and they intended to serve it with almost monastic submission and discipline. Collaboration with the Junkers who were the masters of the State was simply a matter of doing their duty—their Prussian duty; and, in doing it, they used all the traditional harshness of Prussian methods.

The Technique of "Isolation"

It is Bismarck who extended Prussian power over all other German States with the exception of Austria; Bismarck who in 1848-49 did everything to prevent the King of Prussia from accepting the crown of Germany. King Frederick William had to yield actual control of royal power because of his mental state, which had become precarious. His brother William was elected Regent. The new Regent believed as strongly as did Bismarck in the necessity for uniting Germany under Prussian hegemony. He was hesitant as to the methods to be pursued in this. Bismarck was to provide these methods for him. When Frederick William died in 1861, the Regent became King William and in 1862 he named Bismarck Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Prussia.

Bismarck's political experience dated back nine years. Dur-

ing part of this time he had represented Prussia in the Diet of the German Bund* at Frankfort, where he spent his time principally in struggle against Austria, which had a great influence on other German States. The Prussians considered Austria as their only rival for German hegemony, and cost what it might, she was to be eliminated from the scene. Moreover, Austria, with the urbane and kindly methods of her administration was, for Bismarck, a shocking antithesis to Prussian harshness and severity. As such she influenced the other German States in a way which the Prussians considered pernicious. She had, therefore, to be eliminated at any price.

Four years spent as ambassador to the Russian court familiarized Bismarck with the intrigues of diplomacy; so that when he came to power in 1862 he brought with him both national and international experience as background for the battle he was going to wage.

At first Austria still seemed too influential for Bismarck to consider immediately eliminating her from the Bund. Therefore it was first necessary to "isolate" her. The Prussian technique for isolating an adversary from his allies has always been the same since the early times of the Teutonic Order: first, making overtures to the country or the Prince who was to be isolated; second, after the victim fell into the trap, pointing out to his allies that the former was willing to go along without them. Generally this was enough to isolate him completely.

In 1863, while discussions on the eventual reorganization of the Bund were taking place, Prussia demanded permanent presidency of the Bund, on an equal footing with Austria. The proposal was rejected by the latter. But Bismarck found another occasion to tie up with Austria, and to trap this country into isolation from the other German States.

In 1864, the Bund favored the cause of the Prince of Au-

* The only existing bond between German states at that time. It included Austria.

gustenburg in his struggle with the King of Denmark over the Duchies of the Elbe, Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg, which had been occupied by Denmark. The Bund attempted to restore sovereignty over these Duchies to the Prince. Bismarck persuaded Austria to ignore the stand taken by the Bund, and to remain on the sidelines.

In a treaty signed in 1864, Austria and Prussia decided to act on the question as independent powers, and to determine by common agreement the fate of the Duchies of the Elbe (without considering the desires of the Bund for return of these Duchies to the Augustenburg family). In his memoirs, Bismarck acknowledges that, by acting supposedly for the "liberation of Germans from Danish oppression," he was endeavoring above all to procure these territories for Prussia. He had clearly realized that the port of Kiel and the canal connecting the North Sea to the Baltic might some day serve as a base for the establishment of Prussian naval power. He was aware that his aims could be realized only through conclusion of treaties which even before signing them he intended to violate. But he confesses also (resuming here a thesis whose moral inspiration stemmed from the Order, and which is found repeated among the Prussian theoreticians of the nineteenth century) that *a treaty had but little value to him unless it gained additional validity, after its conclusion, through the concordant interests of the contracting parties.*

In August, 1864, following a short and victorious campaign by the Prussian and Austrian armies against the Danes, Bismarck signed the Treaty of Vienna, in which Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg were to be administered jointly by Austria and Prussia.

From this point on, Bismarck concerned himself solely with eliminating his associate, Austria, from the pact which had been concluded. Austria felt that she was drawn by Prussia into an equivocal and embarrassing position with respect to the other German States. To regain their confidence she now

began to look with favor on the settlement proposed by the Bund, which called for the return of the Duchies to the Prince of Augustenburg. Bismarck refused to subordinate the conquered territories to the authority of the existing Bund, but declared himself ready to negotiate with a reorganized Bund, from which Austria would be excluded. On June 14, 1866, the Diet rejected the Prussian proposal by a vote of nine to six. The following day, Prussian troops marched against Austria, crossing through Saxony. After a campaign of seven weeks, Austria was defeated at Koeniggratz.

A Tentacle Reaches Out

With her only rival for German hegemony thus easily eliminated, Prussia now profited from the propitious psychological moment, to impose her terms on the German States. Austria had to accept a "new German organization without the participation of Austria." Two confederations were established: the North German Bund, including all States north of the Main River, and the South German Bund. Relations between the two Bunds were to be defined in subsequent conventions. The North German Bund was to have the King of Prussia as its permanent and hereditary ruler. The Duchies of the Elbe were simply annexed by Prussia, as were the north German States which had previously favored Austria: Hesse-Kassel, Hanover, Nassau, and the free city of Frankfort.

Half of Bismarck's plan was now accomplished: all north German States were henceforth under Prussia's control. The North in its entirety had always had more understanding of Prussian methods than had the South. Bismarck could therefore hope to impose on it the severity of Prussian discipline, and in this manner establish Prussia's rule over a limited territory as a first step toward further expansion. He thought that this progressive expansion would afford him much better opportunities for final success.

Of all the princes dispossessed from their estates in 1866, only the royal family of Hanover continued for many years to protest against the Prussian action. The Duke of Nassau and the Elector of Hesse formally renounced their rights, and the daughter of the Duke of Augustenburg married the young prince William of Hohenzollern, who later became Emperor William II. But the princes of Hanover, who were also heirs to the throne of Brunswick, for a long time considered themselves in a state of war with Prussia. Their faithful subjects organized passive resistance to Prussian occupation. It is interesting to note that the royal family of Hanover is descended from the Welfs or Guelfs, whose struggles against the "Ghibellines" have become legendary. As we have seen (p. 44) the Ghibellines were partisans of the Hohenstaufens, from whom Emperor Frederick II was descended—the same Frederick who had bequeathed his imperial mission to the Teutonic Order, the ancestor of Prussia. The struggle between Guelfs and Ghibellines continued until the end of the fifteenth century. It is perhaps no simple coincidence that the princes of Hanover, descendants of the Welfs, were so violently opposed to the ambitions of the Prussians—the spiritual grandchildren of Frederick II of the Hohenstaufen, or Ghibelline line. The royal family of England issued from the same family of Hanover. As such, they too descended from the Welfs, the traditional enemies of the imperialistically ambitious Hohenstaufens, of whom Prussia became the heir.

The Isolation of France

With Austria removed from German affairs, the first thing to do was to neutralize those other influences which opposed Prussian domination over Germany. Because the south German States made it a practice to invite France's advice, it would be necessary above all to "isolate" France, just as Austria had been isolated. To this end Bismarck employed the

same methods: he showed himself very friendly toward France and entered into discussions with her. During these conversations, Bismarck suggested all sorts of compensations for France if she would permit Prussian expansion of power. Napoleon III at first claimed the left bank of the Rhine, but Bismarck conducted negotiations in such a manner that a solution, calling for the annexation of Luxembourg and Belgium by France, and the extension of Prussian power to the south German States, gained preference in the discussions. Nothing was concluded: neither Napoleon III nor Bismarck definitely accepted the plan. But Bismarck preserved the original draft of the project which had been written in the hand of Benedetti, the ambassador of France. He then arranged for a facsimile of the plan in Benedetti's handwriting to appear in the *London Times*, and at the same time, brought to the attention of the south German States the original claims of Napoleon III to the left bank of the Rhine.

The isolation of France was accomplished at one stroke. Suspicion was cast on her in England and in the south German States. The latter, which then counted on the support of France, from now on felt more disposed to deal with Prussia. Bismarck now concluded a secret military pact—offensive and defensive—with the south German States, by virtue of which the supreme command reverted to the King of Prussia. He next tried to find a reason for declaring war against France, so that Prussian command over all the German armies might become a fact. Indeed, he believed that Prussian direction on the military level—especially if this were successful—might easily be followed by Prussian rule on all other levels over all German States.

Manoeuvring for the throne of Spain furnished the occasion for declaring war against France. A Hohenzollern was candidate for this throne. France protested and asked for explanations. The King of Prussia, William I, held a meeting with Benedetti at Ems, the bathing resort where he stayed,

and matters seemed to work out amicably. The King telegraphed to Bismarck, giving him the details of this meeting. Bismarck deliberately "edited" the telegram, and had the altered version published. This ruse made the French attitude appear more unfriendly, and the response of the King more abrupt than they had been in reality.

Under the influence of this famous "Ems dispatch" a belligerent atmosphere was created within France and Germany. This was exactly what Bismarck had desired. Napoleon III, under the pressure of French public opinion, declared war—a war which immediately turned to the advantage of the German armies, which were under Prussian command. In January, 1871, a few days before the capitulation of Paris, the King of Bavaria (who had always been considered the traditional ally of France) in the joy of conquest, proposed that William I of Prussia be proclaimed Emperor of Germany. The proclamation took place at the Palace of Versailles.

Bismarck, who had accompanied the King to Paris, settled at Versailles for a few months. He used these surroundings to create conditions psychologically favorable for his plans. In the impressive halls of the Palace he had no difficulty in obtaining consent of the German princes to the formalities necessary for the creation of the Reich. He passed all his time in Versailles at this task and succeeded in establishing the unity, under Prussian rule, of the States of north and south Germany.

Bismarck had thus put his theories of 1848-49 into practice: not to allow the King of Prussia to accept the throne of Germany if the latter came as a spontaneous offering of the people; but to acquire the throne through "blood and iron," which according to the traditional conceptions of the Teutonic Order was the path to more lasting results. It did not matter that to achieve these goals it was necessary to provoke wars against Austria and France artificially. Treitschke well expressed the essence of Prussian thought on this subject

when he deplored the fact that no physician could be found who would have the audacity to prescribe war frankly as a wholesome potion for the people.

From the day Bismarck succeeded in subjecting the other German States to Prussian rule the principal task was to impose the Teutonic spirit and Prussian severity on the whole of the German population, and to combat their easygoing tolerant ways—as a weakness, deriving from the "softening" Christian philosophy and corrupting the soul.

The Hydra Needs Time

Culminating in the gains of Bismarck, the Prusso-Teutonics had made great strides since their modest beginning in the thirteenth century. To recapitulate briefly:

We have seen that an uninterrupted evolution proceeded from the beginning of the thirteenth century until 1870. In 1226, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II entrusted a vast imperial mission to the recently created Order of Teutonic Knights, in his Bull of Rimini. The Knights launched the "campaign of Prussia" and conquered one country after another, dragging their neighbors into war on the flimsiest of pretexts, for the sole purpose of constantly increasing their territory. The Order was soon acting entirely on its own account as the sole heir of the traditions of the Hohenstaufen emperors (indirect descendents of the Carolingian emperors) whose line died out with Conrad IV, son of Frederick II. These are the traditions which point toward world domination, and which are in opposition and direct conflict to the claim of the Church of universal spiritual sovereignty. Under the protection of the Order, a caste of nobles, enjoying the favor and complicity of the Knights, settled in the conquered countries. These "Junkers" in turn tried to appropriate for their exclusive advantage the very aims and traditions which the Order itself had carried down from the Germano-Roman

emperors. Already, during the reign of the Order in Prussia between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, the Landjunktens were those who sought the greatest advantages from their privileged position, and they committed the greatest abuses. To protect their special interests they founded a secret society in the fourteenth century, ("Society of Lizards"). Under their influence, the State which the Order of Knights had formed was secularized in the sixteenth century by a Grand Master who was a member of the Hohenzollern family, and became a purely political unit.

Instead of being subservient to the Knights as they had been in the past, the Junkens intended, from the time of the secularization of the Order's State, to have at their service the State officials and army officers, descended from two branches of knighthood—officials of the Order and the warrior Knights. The Electors, and later the Kings of Prussia, had to reckon with their desires and interests. So long as these were respected, the State—Duchy or Kingdom—could pursue those ancient plans established by the visionary Hohenstaufens, extending the bounds of conquest more and more.

The Great Elector and King Frederick II found all sorts of pretexts for waging war. The goal was always the same—ceaseless conquest. The actions of Bismarck were no different, but he was not content with increasing the territory of Prussia. Using the same methods as his predecessors, he achieved domination by Prussia over all the German States—the re-establishment of the Empire to the advantage of Prussia and the Prussian clique. The circle was now completed. The Hohenstaufens had launched the Knights on a path of world conquest, but had lost the Empire. The descendants of the Knights established their regime over a vast territory which served them as a fief, and from which they again conquered the Empire.

In observing how the Great Elector, Frederick the Great, and Bismarck all arrived at their goals, one cannot help but

be struck by the similarity between their hypocritical methods and those employed by the Order, as described by contemporary chroniclers.

Bismarck closed the circle, but by the inclusion of this immense territory within the Prussian orbit, at the same time put a temporary stop to the movement of expansion. The hydra needed time to digest the lamb. Thus in the period between 1870 and 1914, Prussia could give the world the impression that it had nothing to fear from her, and most people were lulled by the illusion that the era of Prussian conquest had passed.

The world did not realize that Prussia needed a temporary period of peace to organize the territories it had acquired. Bismarck himself had decided to call a halt. The Empire was to be thoroughly Prussianized, for only the Prussian discipline inherited from the Order—the "devota subjectio" so dear to the Knights, translated into civic terms in Prussia—would in the long run enable other German countries also to acquire the desirable toughness and ruthlessness. This development would some day enable the Prussians to resume the path of conquest, this time on behalf of the Prussianized Empire.

A Ghost Returns

Principally due to the leadership of Bismarck, years of internal organization followed, but the theoreticians of Prussianism, the Treitschkes, the von Bernhardis and the others, looked toward the future and continued to keep the flame alive. In German intellectual circles they kept in the foreground the ambitions for world domination as well as the basic principles of tactical method through which to achieve it. During this time Bismarck himself was apparently occupied only with standardizing laws throughout Germany, and with unifying the army and the other institutions. Later, over a

period of years, William II pursued the same task, but being more of a mystic than his predecessors, he considered it useful, toward the end of the nineteenth century, to reestablish the organization of the Teutonic Knights in Germany and principally in East Prussia.

This gesture was purely symbolic and added but little to the existing state of affairs; the Junkers, the officers and officials who were now active in the Order had for a long time been united by numerous ties. They had their secret societies, within which they regularly discussed projects concerning the protection of their personal interests and national expansion. Nevertheless, it was characteristic that William II went further than mere reconstruction of the Order by rebuilding Marienburg, its traditional seat. He also named one infantry regiment (No. 152) as well as two artillery regiments (Nos. 71 and 72) for the Teutonic Knights. Measures of this kind would obviously increase the pride and the ambitions of the Junkers, and of their associates in the army and administration.

"Hass gegen England, 1914"

The next task to be undertaken was the attempt to smash the world hegemony of the power which was considered by the Prusso-Teutonic forces as their only major rival—England. Already List had pointed out the importance of this problem for the benefit of German imperialists of the future. Treitschke, in his writings, constantly fulminated against English hegemony, and thus kept alive a flame of hatred which was to become useful at the proper moment. The English had become masters of a fifth of the habitable lands of the earth. "Through robbery," said Treitschke.

N. A. Cramb, Professor of History at Queens College in London, died on the eve of World War I. He foresaw the Prussian struggle against English hegemony as imminent in one form or another, because it was indispensable for the

Prussian plans for world domination. "The quasi-historical form," said Cramb, "which the question of enmity to England now assumes in the minds of thousands of intellectual Germans is this: As the first great united action of the Germans as a people, when they became conscious of their power, was the overthrow of the Roman Empire, and ultimately, in Charlemagne and the Ottonides, the realization of the dream of Alaric—the transfiguration of the world, the subversion of Rome, and the erection upon its ruins of a new State; so in the twentieth century, now that Germany under the Hohenzollern has become conscious of her new life, shall her first great action to be the overthrow of that empire most corresponding to the Roman Empire, which in the dawn of her history she overthrew? In German history the old imperialism begins by the destruction of Rome. Will the new imperialism begin by the destruction of England?" *

If there is conflict between the two nations, it is not because of the insults which Germany might suffer from England. No need for that. The mere existence of the British Empire is an insult to Prussian Germany. Cramb, who was in regular contact with German university circles, and who could clearly estimate the state of mind beyond the Rhine in 1913, said: "England's possessions, England's arrogance on the seas, her claim to world-wide empire—these, Germany answers, are to Germany an insult not less humiliating than any she has met with in the past. And what are these English pretensions? And upon what are they based? Not upon England's supremacy in character or intellect. For what is the character of this race which thus possesses a fifth of the habitable globe and stands forever in the path of Germany's course towards her 'place in the sun', in the path of Germany's course towards empire?"

"It is from this first recrimination that, during the last three

* J. A. Cramb, M.A., *Germany and England*, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1914. Quoted by permission of the publishers.

or four decades, largely under the influence of the Prussian School of History, there has been evolved a portrait of England as the great robber-State. In one phase or another this conception is gradually permeating all classes, making itself apparent, now in a character in fiction, now in a poem, now in a work of history or economics, now in the lecture hall at Bonn or Heidelberg or Berlin, now in a political speech.

"And the theme is precise. England's supremacy is an unreality, her political power is as hollow as her moral virtues; the one an arrogance and pretence, the other hypocrisy. She cannot long maintain that baseless supremacy. On the sea she is rapidly being approached by other powers; her resources, except by immigration, are almost stationary, and her very immigration debases still further her resources. Her decline is certain. There may be no war. The display of power may be enough, and England after 1900, like Venice after 1500, will gradually atrophy, sunk in torpor. . . .

". . . Who is to succeed her? It may not be Germany; some Power it must be. But if Germany *were* to inherit the sceptre, which is falling from her nerveless hands . . . ?

"And having visualized this future, the German imagination, in a tempest of envy or vehement hate, becomes articulate and takes various shapes, resulting in an almost complete arraignment of the British Empire, of the English character, and of all our institutions and all our efforts as an empire-building race."

For what is the supreme ideal, Cramb asks, for all these German thinkers, who influence future events in Germany? "It is world dominion," he answers; "it is world empire; it is the hegemony of a planet. It assigns to Germany in the future a role like that which Rome or Hellas or Judaea or Islam have played in the past. That is Germany's hero-ideal. It is at least greatly conceived.

"Assuming for a moment that this world-predominance is possible to Germany, what is the testimony of Germany's past,

to her capacity to play this part? You find Germany an empire already in the ninth century, if you regard Charlemagne as a German—as he was; and again you have attempts at imperialism made by the German race under the Ottos in the tenth century; but most distinctly is Germany an imperial power in the twelfth century in the time of the Hohenstaufen, one of the most tragic dynasties in history."

Characterizing the spiritual heritage of Treitschke, Cramb says: "Treitschke has defined the aim of Germany, and Treitschke's definition, which has been taken up by his disciples, is this: that just as the greatness of Germany is to be found in the governance of Germany by Prussia, so the greatness and good of the world is to be found in the predominance there of German culture, of German mind, in a word, of German character. This is the ideal of Germany, and this is Germany's role as Treitschke saw it in the future."

These considerations of Cramb (originating in a lecture series he gave in 1913 and published in April, 1914) certainly correspond with the evolution of things during the first World War, which was a first attempt to rupture English political hegemony. But other passages in these same lectures have greater point for a more recent past than the 1914 epoch. Thus Cramb points out that the forces directing Germany intend not only to achieve world dominion in their own way, and to eliminate for this purpose the power of England. What they are equally concerned with is to replace the predominant civilization of the world with another, purely Germanic; and to do away with Christianity, the "softening influence" of which is in direct contradiction to the Teutonic moral concepts.

"This world dominion of which Germany dreams," says Cramb, with great academic objectivity, "is not simply a material dominion. Germany is not blind to the lessons inculcated by Napoleonic tyranny. Force alone, violence or brute strength, by its mere presence or by its loud manifestations in

war, may be necessary to establish this dominion; but its ends are spiritual. The triumph of the Empire will be the triumph of German culture, of the German world-vision in all the phases and departments of human life and energy, in religions, poetry, science, art, politics, and social endeavor.

"The characteristics of this German world-vision, the benefits which its predominance is likely to confer upon mankind, are, a German would allege, truth instead of falsehood in the deepest and gravest preoccupations of the human mind; German sincerity instead of British hypocrisy; Faust instead of Tartuffe. And whenever I have put to any of the adherents of this ideal the further question: 'Where in actual German history do you find your guarantee for the character of the spiritual empire; is not the true role of Germany cosmopolitan and peaceful; are not Herder and Goethe its prophets?' I have met with one invariable answer: 'The political history of Germany, from the accession of Frederick in 1740 to the present hour, has admittedly no meaning unless it be regarded as a movement toward the establishment of a world-empire, with the war against England as the necessary preliminary. Similarly the curve which, during the last century and a half, Germany has traced in religion and metaphysical thought, from Kant and Hegel to Schopenhauer, Strauss and Nietzsche, has not less visibly been a movement towards a newer world-religion, a newer world-faith. That fatal tendency to cosmopolitanism, to a dream-world which Heine derided and Treitschke deplored, does, indeed, still remain, but how transfigured!

"But what is to be Germany's part in the future of human thought? Germany answers: 'It is reserved for us to resume in thought that creative role in religion which the whole Teutonic race abandoned fourteen centuries ago. Judæa and Galilee cast their dreary spell over Greece and Rome, when Greece and Rome were already sinking into decrepitude and the creative power in them was exhausted, when weariness

and bitterness wakened with their greatest spirits at day, and sank to sleep again with them at night. But Judæa and Galilee struck Germany in the splendor and heroism of her prime. Germany and the whole Teutonic people in the fifth century made the great error. They conquered Rome, but dazzled by Rome's authority they adopted the religion and the culture of the vanquished. Germany's own deep religious instinct, her native genius for religion, manifested in her creative success, was arrested, stunted, thwarted. But, having once adopted the new faith, she strove to live that faith, and for more than thirty generations she has struggled and wrestled to see with eyes that were not her eyes, to worship a God that was not her God, to live with a world-vision that was not her vision, and to strive for a heaven that was not her heaven. And with what chivalry and with what loyalty did not Germany strive! With what ardour she flung herself into the pursuit of sainthood as an ideal and then into the Crusades! Conrad and Barbarossa, Otto the Great and Frederick II, Hildebrand and Innocent III, were of her blood, so were Godfrey and Tancred and Bohemund. Yet in the East, in the very height of her enthusiasm, the outward fabric of faith sank. In the East where she sought the grave of Christ, she saw beyond it the grave of Balder, and higher than the New Jerusalem the shining walls of Asgard and of Valhalla. In Jerusalem, standing beside an empty grave, the summits of a mightier vision gleamed spectral around her. And whilst her Crusaders, front to front with Islam, burst into passionate denials and set Mohammed above Christ, or in exasperated scorn derided all religion, her great thinkers and mystics led her steadily toward the serener heights, where knowledge and faith dissolve in vision, and ardour is all.

"A great hope had sunk; a mightier hope had arisen. But like the purposes of the world-spirit in the everlasting self-disaccord, this hope could only be born in the bloodiest strife, and agony infinite, and fatalizing hatred and war. . . . Rome

no longer a guide, Germany was torn by the violence of the furious heresies, from which sprang the secret orgies of the Black Mass, and that subterranean literature of which the "De tribus impostoribus" is a sign.

"The seventeenth century flung off Rome; the eighteenth undermined Galilee itself; . . . and with the opening of the twentieth century, Germany, her long travail past, is reunited to her pristine genius, her creative power in religion and thought.

"And what is the religion which, on the whole, may be characterized as the religion of the most earnest and passionate minds of young Germany? What is this new movement? The movement, the governing idea of the centuries from the fourteenth to the nineteenth is the wrestle of the German intellect not only against Rome but against Christianity itself. Must Germany submit to this alien creed derived from an alien clime? Must she forever confront the ages, the borrower of her religion, her own genius for religion numbed and paralysed? . . .

"Thus while preparing to found a world-empire, Germany is also preparing to create a world-religion. No cultured European nation since the French Revolution has made an experiment in creative religion. The experiment which England, with her "dull imagination" has recoiled from, Germany will make; the fated task which England has declined she will essay."

"That is the faith of young Germany in 1913," concludes Cramb.

His description of the German state of mind before the first World War is interesting in many respects. It is a rapid résumé of a spiritual evolution paralleling the social and political evolution which we have described. As to the future, his description has more significance for the events of the last ten years than for the period which was immediately to follow the time when Cramb was speaking. The Germany of Wil-

liam II was not yet ready to make an open break with Christianity. The Germany of Hitler is much closer to this point, but here as elsewhere, we can see that she only executes what has for many years been definitely planned by the Prusso-Teutonic group.

Cramb does not resolve the problem whose contradictions strike him. He is impressed by the profundity of the neo-pagan spirit which he has encountered in Germany, and by the political importance of Prussian traditions. On the other hand he is well aware of the Germany of Herder and Goethe and of its "cosmopolitan and peaceful spirit" but he does not know which to believe is the true spirit of Germany. He does not yet come to the conclusion that both Germanies might quite well have existed over a period of centuries simultaneously; the one always deeply pagan, of a pretended Christianity (Emperor Henry IV, Barbarossa, his grandson Frederick II, the Teutonic Knights and their descendants); and the other, thoroughly Christianized to an extent as great as any other European country, but constantly suffering from the exactions and egotism of the Pagan Germany. Cramb sees only the contradictions, but the permanent and secular character of the conflict seems to escape him completely. Prussia's propaganda was so clever that by 1913—forty-three years after the Prussian clique had manoeuvred themselves into the saddle over the rest of Germany—she made the world forget that "Prussia" and "Germany" are not absolutely identical.

More Dreams

Frederick Scott Oliver, another observer in the same epoch, writing in London (1915) says:*

"The complete mosaic of the German vision is an empire incomparably greater in extent, in riches and in population

* Frederick Scott Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1915. Quoted by permission of the publishers.

than any which has yet existed since the world first began to keep its records. Visionnaires are always in a hurry. This stupendous arrangement of the Earth's surface is confidently anticipated to occur within the first half of the present century. It is to be accomplished by a race distinguished for its courage, industry and devotion—let us admit so without grudging.* But in numbers—even if we count the Teutons of the Habsburg Empire along with those of the Hohenzollern—it amounts upon the highest computation, to less than eighty millions. This is the grain of mustard-seed which is confidently believed to have in it 'the property to get up and spread,' until within little more than a generation, it will dominate and control more than seven hundred millions of human souls.

"Nor to German eyes, which dwell lovingly, and apparently without misgiving, upon this appalling prospect of symmetry and vastness, are these the sum total of its attractions. The achievement of their vision would bring peace to mankind. For there would then be but two empires remaining, which need give the overlords of the world the smallest concern. Of these Russia in their opinion needs a century at least in which to emerge out of primitive barbarism and become a serious danger; while in less than a century, the United States must inevitably crumble to nonentity, through the worship of false gods and the corruption of a decadent democracy. Neither of these two empires could ever hope to challenge the German Mastery of the World.

"In South America as in North, there is already a German garrison, possessing great wealth and influence. And in the South, at any rate, it may well become, very speedily, an imperative obligation on the Fatherland to secure for its exiled children more settled conditions under which to extend the advantages of German commerce and *kultur*. President Mon-

* Like Cramb, Oliver does not distinguish sufficiently between the German people (whose good qualities appeal to him) and the clique which goads the people in the direction of these ultra-ambitious plans.

roe has already been dead a hundred years or more. According to the calculations of the pedantocracy,* his famous doctrine will need some stronger backing than the moral disapprobation of a hundred millions of materially-minded and unwarlike people, in order to withstand the pressure of German diplomacy, if it should summon war-ships and transports to its aid."

Note that this résumé of German conceptions dates from 1915, and is based on observations made in 1912-1913—an epoch, therefore, in which the "Nazi menace" which today seems alone to be indicted, did not yet exist. This is the epoch in which one of the most famous scientists of Germany, Professor Ernst Haeckel, had formulated the German war aims in a series of 8 points (which would be interesting to compare with the 8 points of Roosevelt and Churchill). These evidently represented only the "immediate aims" in the grandiose whole of the Teutonic conception:

- (1) Smashing of English tyranny.
- (2) Invasion of Great Britain and occupation of London.
- (3) Partition of Belgium. The section from west of Ostend to Antwerp to become a State in the German Empire; the northern section to go to Holland. Luxembourg to receive the southeast section, and thus expanded, would henceforth be a united German State.
- (4) Certain English colonies and the Congo Free State to Germany.
- (5) France to cede its northeast Departments to Germany.
- (6) Russia to be neutralized by the reconstitution of the Polish kingdom under Austrian influence.
- (7) The German Baltic provinces to be restored to the German Empire.
- (8) Finland, united with Sweden, to become an independent kingdom.

* Oliver's designation for the Prusso-Teutonic theoreticians.

It was the epoch of William II, and many people had the illusion that he alone was responsible for the "German menace." Some blamed the world unrest created by Germany simply on his contradictory temperament, which was responsible for his alternate pacific declarations and "sword-rattling" harangues.

In reality he was a figurehead who, at times, was even something of an encumbrance to the Prusso-Teutonic forces—who alone counted in the control of German affairs; for in these outbursts, which he did not very well know how to control, he revealed all too readily the policies and plans which should have been kept secret. But this was of little importance since the Prusso-Teutonic plans were pursued unwaveringly, regardless of which man was used as a front. This man alone would appear to the outside world.

Obviously Bismarck, who was a man of high qualities, rendered much more service to the Prusso-Teutonic cause than did that clown-supreme, William II. But it was not the latter alone who was responsible for the war of 1914. And if, abroad, he was considered solely to blame for this war and, in his own country, for the defeat which followed, this was fully to the advantage of the Prusso-Teutonic circles. The latter thus escaped blame from two sources—which would have been a devastating blow for them had they acted directly and openly.

Under the Cloak

Because of the great variety in the apparent aims pursued by the Prusso-Teutonic group over a period of centuries, the observer of German affairs has often been mistaken on the subject of the group's actual intentions. Thus the Prussians are at first allied with Austria—then they attack her so as to eliminate her from the Empire. Before 1870 they keep in the good graces of France—then at the first opportunity they

invade her. They speak of a "Teutonic solidarity" with England—and then call her their greatest enemy. They envisage a reconstituted Poland in order to make Russia powerless—and later conclude a temporary alliance with Russia permitting the occupation of Poland.

Sometimes the men who speak in the name of Prusso-Teutonic Germany are replaced by others and the change in aims is explained by the personal preferences of these men. The world is thus reassured, made to believe that Germany is abandoning her ancient plans due to the influence of new leaders. But even where a leader keeps his place, although the avowed aims have changed, the world is time and again taken in by the illusion that Germany is finally limiting her aims, and that she is no longer to be considered as dangerous as people imagined her. This was the reasoning during the period of calm between 1870 and 1914 (which calm, as we have seen, was necessary for Prussia to strengthen her domination over Germany); in the years which followed the 1918 armistice; and most recently in the time between any two changes in Hitler's tactics.

Sometimes these varied aims, these alleged "oscillations" as to the ends pursued in German politics, were simply tactical and designed to veil the real intentions of Germany. She would thus be in a much better position to make preparations in the direction she actually intended to take. But many of the changes in direction have been sincere.

Frequently these periodical shifts in the "German menace" may be explained by the absolute empiricism of the Prusso-Teutonic methods. It makes no difference what the *immediate objective* is so long as the *final goal* remains the same. If the matter of primary importance for Berlin had been the conquest of France, Austria, Poland, Russia or England—her behavior, alternately friendly and threatening to each of these countries, may appear illogical. But the conquest of any of these countries may be considered only as one of the pos-

sible first steps toward the only real goal which interests her: world dominion. Thus she can start action anywhere and continue it, guided by opportunity, resistance and degree of failure encountered. The chess player, at the beginning of his game, does not generally know which pieces he wants to win from his opponent first, but he knows his final goal quite well. The empiricism in the choice of her immediate objectives allows Germany better to hide her actual game and even to make interim allies of the countries to which such an alliance is acceptable. In the long run they will surely be devoured, as were the others.

In the quarter century between 1914 and 1939, the immediate ends of Germany have changed somewhat, but the basic plan behind her actions has scarcely been altered. The venture of 1914 had failed by 1918. Was England called the major enemy during the World War—the enemy who was to be wiped out? This is of no importance. Since she proved to be the stronger, Germany would court her friendship over a period of years so that she might be neutralized.

To encourage England's confidence in her, Germany would first show a façade of peace, the German Republic. This was the strategy Germany employed. Through it she gained time to re-establish her forces. Then—since the façade had served its purpose and was now a nuisance—she removed it and erected another, more threatening than any of the ancient ones.

This façade is Hitler and Nazism—a façade very valuable today to the Prusso-Teutonic forces, but which could be sacrificed over night as the others were, if such sacrifice would be to the advantage of the real leaders of Germany.

We shall try in the pages which follow to show the means by which the Prusso-Teutonic forces succeeded in maintaining their position in the years between the two World Wars and how they allowed Hitler to accede to "power," so that he might *serve* them.

CHAPTER IV

THE FEHME MURDERS

THE DEFEAT OF 1918 wrought considerable changes in the political organization of Germany. The monarchic system having borne the entire blame for the débâcle, the German people now carried through their democratic revolt. The Hohenzollerns were banished and the Republic was set up.

The Prusso-Teutonic caste, composed of Junkers, officers and officials, had been well served by the Hohenzollerns. First they brought about the secularization of the Order's State and later, on the initiative of Bismarck, achieved complete Prusso-Teutonic seizure of the whole of Germany. The Hohenzollerns retained the confidence of this caste until 1918. But when the World War ended in defeat for Germany, the Hohenzollern family became a most convenient scapegoat. A few individual members of the Prusso-Teutonic caste continued sentimental relations with Wilhelm II. For the group as a whole, however, the Emperor no longer existed, since to disciples of the cruel Teutonic philosophy any defeat is tantamount to suicide.

Germany seemed to be passing through the same transformation which both America and France had experienced almost a century and a half before. The Rightist parties, whose popularity had greatly declined in the course of these events, could not muster enough strength to oppose this political development. But the Prusso-Teutonic forces, accustomed to working in obscurity and to preparing their positions long in advance, did not feel vanquished by all this. To them the defeat represented a temporary setback to the execution of their plans.

Sacrifice of the Hohenzollerns seemed to appease the wrath

of the world; so that the Prusso-Teutonic clique was able to reorganize its forces quietly and prepare to resume control of the affairs of Germany. It was concerned, first of all, with terrorizing those unfortunates who had had, after the defeat of 1918, the unhappy idea of introducing a democratic regime and spirit into Germany. It was also necessary to eliminate the leaders of the democratic parties.

To gain time it would be necessary to hold friendly relations with England for a while and in the meantime to prepare for other conquests. But for many years the Prusso-Teutonic forces could pay no attention to foreign politics because internal political problems in Germany more urgently demanded solutions, and these had to be worked out methodically.

Could the Rightist parties, many of whose members were faithful servants of the Prusso-Teutonic forces, no longer be useful in the Reichstag, as in Bismarck's time? Granted—but what difference would this make? The Prusso-Teutonics did not intend to bother with the Reichstag—they would use methods completely opposite to those of parliament. Moreover, methods of this type would be closer to the traditions of the Prusso-Teutonic group than would any parliamentary procedure. Bismarck himself had accepted the parliamentary system only after much hesitation and with a certain amount of resignation. He had found it a difficult task to get this system accepted by his Junker friends. These new methods, which at the same time were very old, called for *terror through assassination*.

Familiar Memories

The Prusso-Teutonic forces, never acting openly, had the ingenious idea of reviving and making use of a Germanic institution of the Middle Ages, the Fehme. The Fehme was a sort of secret society which set itself up as a tribunal in all

matters. Its members were at the same time judges and executors of decisions.

In the three and a half years following the Armistice, from 1919 to June 24, 1922, the date of Rathenau's murder, some 354 political assassinations were perpetrated in Germany by the various "national revival" organizations. For only two of these crimes, the assassinations of Rathenau and Eisner, was any punishment meted out, and this was extremely light. Despite the fact that the various State police forces were officially republican organizations, usually they allowed the assassins to escape. In those cases, however, where the killers were actually arrested by overzealous officials, they were acquitted, or at best fined or condemned to imprisonment for a ridiculously small period on some silly ground, for example, the carrying of guns without a permit.

Count Arco, who had assassinated Eisner, leader of the Bavarian Left, was sentenced to death in January, 1920, but his sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. This actually consisted in his doing some vague farm work near the prison. Finally on April 13, 1924, his sentence was suspended and he was set free. Shortly thereafter he was appointed director of the "Sueddeutsche Lufthansa," a major aviation concern controlled by the Reich.

These assassinations occurred with a regularity that baffled the general public, and yet they seemed to be part of an organized plan. Soon people began to speak of the "Fehme" in connection with these crimes, comparing the assassinations with the "executions" of the notorious secret German tribunal of past centuries—which the recent crimes resembled in many respects. In 1920, 1922, 1924 and in 1931, the German writer, E. J. Gumbel, published works which attempted to expose the organizations responsible for these outrages, and to draw the attention of the German public to the criminal complicity of the judicial machinery of the Reich and the other authorities with the Fehme murderers. In his four books, Gumbel assem-

bled considerable documentation concerning these post-war "executions." But his appeals and warnings were in vain, and the Fehme was able to continue its activities unhindered.

Despite public belief to the contrary, Gumbel did not relate these crimes to the blood tribunal of the Middle Ages. He considered the word "Fehme" simply an expression well chosen by the murderers to point up the actual resemblance between the two institutions. We shall probably never know exactly what information was contained in the heavy file the Bavarian deputy, Karl Gareis,* had planned to present to the Bavarian Landtag concerning the political crimes of that time. A few days after he announced his intention of discussing the material he had assembled, he was shot to death in the street. The two men who participated in his assassination escaped and were never apprehended. In any case, we know this much: that Gareis had spoken of a "conspiracy going back a thousand years" which he intended to reveal. He must have been referring to one of the only two German organizations which stemmed from the Middle Ages: the Fehme and the Teutonic Order.

The history of the Fehme tribunals was independent of that of the Teutonic Knights. The Order had always claimed that it did not have to submit to the jurisdiction of the terrible Fehme. But actually the frightful practices of the Fehme had widely penetrated among the Order's circles. Kotzebue related, in speaking of the Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode, that at his time many Comthurs (regional commanders) of the Order were members of the Fehme, and the Grand Master himself was suspected of being one of its leaders. "One morning, two Knights who were beyond reproach were found hanging from an oak tree outside Marienburg—marked by the Fehme," says Kotzebue. "The Grand Master was asked to prosecute the murderers. He did nothing. The others, en-

* See page 3.

raged, again requested action from him, and now he declared in dead earnest: 'One should abstain from passing judgment on such things.'"

After the seventeenth century, the Fehme was rarely heard from. Finally, people believed that the organization must have been dissolved, despite the fact that no laws or decrees suspending or condemning its practices had ever been promulgated. But whether or not the Fehme, as a regularly constituted organization, actually survived until 1918 is of but relative importance. In any event, its Middle Age practices were well remembered in the spoken traditions of many German families. When, following the Armistice of 1918, the Prussian Junker organizations decided to revive these bloody practices, they were well aware of the traditional streams that might be tapped in the interests of their cause. They used methods which evoked familiar memories throughout Germany.

A Thousand-Year-Old Conspiracy

What were these notorious traditions of the Fehme? They were founded on the old German law giving all "manorial lords" the right to judge freely over their serfs. This practice was maintained particularly in Westphalia. In a later, undetermined period* it gave rise to the secret tribunal of the "Holy Fehme"—a tribunal which meted out but a single kind of punishment, the death sentence.

The Fehme originated from a pre-Christian, pagan moral conception, despite the fact that it claimed to be Christian. This institution served no more of a religious purpose than did the Teutonic Order, despite the religious façade which both organizations had found useful at their inception. (At the time of their foundation all institutions had to be Christian.) The Fehme represented a revolt of Teutonic law against pre-

* German historians have placed the origin of the Fehme at various times between the reign of Charlemagne and the fifteenth century.

vailing Roman law, which latter was the basic code of the official German tribunals. The existence of the Fehme was known, but its operations were secret. It was subject to no authority except the Emperor's. The latter, at a time not clearly defined in German history, had delegated this authority to the Archbishop of Cologne who was head of the Fehme, at least nominally. Indeed the Fehme tribunal had among its principal official tasks the punishment of crimes against religion; but in practice its activity was entirely different.

The Fehme soon became simply a means of terror against all individuals who might be in personal conflict with members of this powerful secret organization. The Christian appearance it assumed was but a cloak; and, moreover, in no other Christian country was there a similar organization. The Fehme was of purely German conception, and the morality underlying its judgments was a Teutonic morality in direct contradiction to the principles and customs of Christianity. In common with the Teutonic Order the Fehme affected Christian aims; yet beneath this disguise—so suitable to the times—it pursued ends which were purely Teutonic. *The survival in Germany of the traditions of these two institutions based on pre-Christian morality—the Teutonic Order and the Fehme—provides the only satisfactory explanation for a series of contradictory phenomena by which Germany, in her recent history, has so frequently confused the people of western civilization.*

Fundamentally, therefore, we witness the clash of two opposing civilizations—and it was our fond illusion that one of these ceased to exist in the far distant past. This error comes from the fact that *since the period of the Christianization of Germany, the civilization of the barbaric ages has been hidden beneath a Christian cloak and has survived there. In this manner it has succeeded in preserving its institutions for ends clearly opposed to those of Christianity.*

It is in facts such as these that one must seek the explanation

of the "thousand-year-old conspiracy" which Deputy Gareis had dared to mention—thus sealing his own fate.

The Red Earth

The tribunals of the Middle Age Fehme operated in Westphalia, but they claimed jurisdictional power over all of Germany. Westphalian "Freigraf" presided over the meetings of the Fehme. They said that their families had received this privilege from Charlemagne, and that they had to hold sessions exclusively on Westphalian soil. In the characteristically symbolic language of all Middle Ages secret associations, Westphalian soil was designated as "Die rote Erde" (the Red Earth)—(an expression associated perhaps with the blood spilled in the course of Fehme judgments) and it was stated that the tribunal of the Fehme was always to hold court on "Red Earth." (It is interesting to note that one of the most influential Nazi newspapers, published in Westphalia, is called *Die Rote Erde*.)

In the course of judgment, the Freigraf was assisted by the *Freischoeffen* (jurors). It was under the name "Freischoeffe" that each Fehme member was known. All Fehme members were therefore qualified to participate in judgment. But the *Freischoeffen* were not only judges or jurors; they were hangmen as well. In effect they were charged with executing judgments pronounced by themselves or by other *Freischoeffen*.

At one time it was estimated that there were over 100,000 *Freischoeffen* in all of Germany. Actually, while the Fehme tribunal functioned only in Westphalia, the *Freischoeffen*, who were its police and executionary organs, were present everywhere, scattered throughout the various German countries. The *Freischoeffen* kept their functions absolutely secret, identifying each other by secret signs. But even if they were not recognized by the average citizens, everyone knew that they managed to lay hands on their victims, wherever

they might be hiding. Its occult aspect contributed largely to increasing the terror which the Fehme inspired over all of Germany.

There were a great number of Fehme tribunals in Westphalia. Generally they held sessions on some elevated spot beneath an old tree—preferably a linden. The Freigraf and his Freischoeffen sat there before a large table on which was placed an unsheathed sword and a rope. The plaintiff and the witnesses had to swear by the sword, while the rope was used for execution of sentence.

If a complaint against someone was made by a Freischoeffe before a Fehme tribunal (Freischoeffen alone were allowed to appear as plaintiffs before the Fehme) a summons was issued against the accused. The latter rarely responded to the summons since it was well known with what difficulty acquittal was obtained; and further that but one type of punishment was decreed by the Fehme—the death penalty.

If the accused did not make an appearance, the plaintiff had the right to bring him in by force from any section of Germany, seizing him with the assistance of his "Eideshelfer" (sworn deputies), who were witnesses in support of the original complaint and who were, in addition, his deputies.

Originally it seems that only two witnesses for the plaintiff were necessary, but later the number was raised to six. The defendant might try to clear himself by having his own Eideshelfer, or "witnesses of defense," sworn in in greater number than the witnesses of accusation sworn in for the plaintiff. But the latter could neutralize such effect by increasing in turn the number of his own witnesses. The number of witnesses allowed to the defense and the prosecution was fixed by law as two, six, thirteen or twenty. If one party produced two witnesses, the other party had to produce not less than six in order to have a chance to win his case, since any other number would not be recognized by the court. In turn the opposing party had to produce thirteen witnesses, so that he might

win at least a temporary advantage from the other side. His opponent, finally, in order to win his case, would have to produce twenty. If the plaintiff succeeded in presenting twenty Freischoeffen in support of his complaint, no defense witnesses in greater number were allowed and a death sentence was made mandatory.

The witnesses had to swear to the effect that they knew the plaintiff well as an honest man and his word was good enough for them if he accused the defendant. On the other hand, witnesses for the defendant would swear that they knew him to be innocent. The plaintiffs and the defendants always had to swear in addition to their own witnesses. Consequently the total number of oaths administered was three and seven (numbers which appear frequently in the symbolism of the Middle Ages), or fourteen and twenty-one (multiples of seven). This all made for progressive "outbidding" in the number of witnesses. It was understood, however, that witnesses for either side had to be Freischoeffen. For one who was not himself an influential Freischoeffe it was obviously difficult to find sufficient numbers of other Freischoeffen prepared to swear on his behalf. Since the plaintiff was of necessity a Freischoeffe, the defendant, even if he was himself a member of the Fehme and particularly if he was not, was already at a disadvantage when he presented himself before the tribunal.

Where the defendant was present, the death sentence was carried out at once. The Freischoeffen, co-judges of the tribunal, seized the condemned man and hanged him from the nearest tree.

If the accused deemed it prudent to stay away, or if the summons could not be served on him, the Freigraf, president of the tribunal, would call for a "heimliche Acht" or "secret session." Indeed it was considered important to keep the procedures secret, particularly in cases where the accused was absent. This was to prevent the condemned man from learning of the sentence, which would enable him to hide out in an

effort to avoid execution. If, after convening in secret session, it was noticed that an outsider, a non-Freischoeffe, remained in the vicinity (every outsider was supposed to leave), the Freigraf would stand up, call the man, place the rope around the neck of the unfortunate fellow and have him hanged from the nearest tree by the Freischoeffen. Such action was taken even where the outsider did not realize that he might be trespassing.

After having ascertained that the defendant had not appeared, the Freigraf had his name called out four times, and then asked if anyone were present to defend the accused. Next, the plaintiff swore to the truth of his accusation, and his witnesses in turn took an oath, declaring that they believed the plaintiff incapable of perjury. The proof was thus considered sufficient, and sentence was pronounced.

The Knife in the Tree

According to ancient law-books of the Fehme, the Freigraf pronounced sentence in the following formula:

"The defendant by the name of 'X': I hereby deprive him of peace and of the rights and liberties granted by Kaiser Charlemagne and approved by Pope Leo; and further attested under oath by all princes, nobles, knights and vassals, freemen and Freischoeffen in Westphalia; and depose him and set him outside of all peace, all liberty and all rights, by virtue of the King's ban and malediction, abandoning him to the greatest misery and disgrace; and make him unworthy, outlawed, deprived of his seal, dishonorable, without peace and not entitled to share in the common law; and abduct him and 'verfehme' him [put him under the curse of the Fehme] according to the rules of the 'heimliche Acht' [secret tribunal]; and vow his neck to the rope and his corpse to the beasts and the birds of the air—to be eaten by them until nothing remains; and commit his soul to God in Heaven in

His authority; and vacate his life and property; and his wife shall be widowed and his children orphans."

Here is the procedure which followed, according to the prescriptions contained in the books of the Fehme:

"The Freigraf shall take the rope which is braided from willow switches and throw it outside the tribunal, and then all Freischoeffen standing in presence of the tribunal shall spit, as though the outlaw were to be hanged within that very hour. Following this, the Freigraf shall command all Freigrafen and Freischoeffen, reminding them of their oaths and their honor as members of the 'heimliche Acht,' obliging them, the moment they have seized the outlaw, to hang him from the nearest tree, according to all their strength and might."

The Freigraf now handed the plaintiff a document which by his seal confirmed the sentence, and in which all Fehme members were requested to lend him their support in the execution of sentence. The bearer of this document departed immediately in search of his victim, being careful not to mention his mission to anyone, with the exception of other Freischoeffen, lest the condemned be warned in time, and flee from punishment. Frequently the condemned lived in a part of Germany at some distance from Westphalia. This made no difference, since Freischoeffen were found everywhere, and it was the duty of each, were he so requested, to assist in the execution. He was first to look over the official sentence which bore the seal of the Freigraf; or if such document were lacking, it would suffice for three other Freischoeffen to swear before him that the individual being pursued had actually been outlawed by the Fehme. Having thus received the requested proof, he could not neglect his duty, even if the condemned were his best friend or his own brother.

The execution was usually carried out by three or four Freischoeffen. They would seize the condemned, who in most cases was not, until that moment, aware of his having been

sentenced by the Holy Fehme. Without further ado he was then hanged from the nearest tree. In order to make clear that this was no ordinary crime but an act of the Fehme, a knife was stuck into the tree. Where the condemned resisted, the Freischoeffen had the right to kill him in any manner possible. In such cases they would hang his cadaver—and, as usual, stick the knife into the tree.

It happened from time to time that a Freischoeffe, having learned of the condemnation of one of his friends, would try to warn him discreetly so that he might escape, even though he knew that he thus risked his own life. The harmless words pronounced casually: "It's just as well to eat one's bread elsewhere than here," became a formula whose significance was understood by non-initiates. Such was the fear inspired by the Fehme over all Germany that if these words were addressed to any man—even if he were the most influential citizen in town—and if he understood their meaning, he would gather whatever possessions he could and overnight would become a vagabond, travelling under an assumed name, living the rest of his days far from his wife and children.

If it became known that someone had been outlawed by the Fehme, no other individual would dare to help him, for by being seen in the company of someone sought by the Fehme he would be risking his life. The condemned man, abandoned by all, would hide where he could until he was finally discovered by the Fehme.

The range of crimes coming under the jurisdiction of the Fehme was extremely wide. In line with contemporary thought, crimes against religion and the Ten Commandments are mentioned first, despite the fact that no evidence is found that the Fehme ever functioned as a religious tribunal. Following this are enumerated "all crimes against honor and law—treason, murder, robbery, perjury, defamation, rape, and abuse of power." The intentions of those who had originally assigned to the Fehme jurisdiction over these crimes were no

doubt excellent, but in practice anyone coming in personal conflict with a member of the Fehme risked condemnation by the blood tribunal; for it was always simple to discover a "crime against honor" as a basis for accusation, and an influential Freischoeffe had no difficulty in finding others to present as witnesses, supporting his accusations.

The Noose Around The Neck

The slightest betrayal of Fehme secrets by a Freischoeffe was punished by death, and in such cases execution took place without a trial. On this subject we read the following in the Fehme law-books:

"If a Freischoeffe brings into the open the secrets and password of the 'secret tribunal' [heimliche Acht] or tells outsiders anything of this, whether small or large portions, then he shall be seized without trial by the Freigraf and Freischoeffen who will tie his hands together before him, place a cloth over his eyes, throw him on his belly and rip his tongue from out of his throat; a three-strand rope is to be slipped around his neck and he shall be hanged seven feet higher than a condemned 'Verfehmt', outlawed criminal."

Non-initiates who tried to discover the secrets of the Fehme, or who simply dared to glance at a Fehme document, were led before the tribunal and executed on the spot. Those books and archives of the Fehme which have survived until today carry a strict warning that anyone opening them who is not a Freischoeffe is subject to jurisdiction of the secret tribunal. The fear which such methods inspired was so great that even in the nineteenth century one could still find unopened Fehme documents in the German archives, their Fehme seals unbroken. They bear the inscription: "No one is allowed to read, or to have read to him this letter, unless he be a true Freischoeffe of the secret tribunal [der heimlichen beschlossenen Acht] of the Holy Roman Empire."

The Freischoeffen were granted such broad powers that they could execute any man, even without trial before the tribunal, if three Freischoeffen saw the accused in the very act of committing a crime punishable by the Fehme. Further, the confession of a crime was considered equivalent to its actually having been witnessed. Thus if someone boasted in the presence of several persons that he had committed any of the crimes under the jurisdiction of the Fehme, without realizing that at least three of such individuals were Freischoeffen, the latter were required—at the first opportunity they might find to do so without being discovered—to seize the man and hang him from the nearest tree. We can well imagine the number of abuses to which such methods gave rise.

The terror spread by the Fehme proved at the same time to be its best recruiting agent. To be a member of the Fehme was considered insurance, at least to a certain extent, against being unjustly condemned by the secret tribunal. In effect, it was always easier for a Freischoeffe to defend himself than it was for an outsider. In the early days, when a Freischoeffe was accused he could clear his name by swearing his innocence. Later this advantage was withdrawn, and all defendants, regardless of their affiliation, had to present a sufficient number of witnesses in their defense. Yet obviously an influential Freischoeffe would much more easily find a great number of witnesses among his fellow Freischoeffen than would a non-member of the Fehme.

While in the early days, the Freigrafen had seen to it that only men of unimpeachable virtue were to be admitted to Fehme membership, at a later time men of doubtful moral character invaded the ranks of the Freischoeffen. The opportunity to do as one pleased was so appealing that all sorts of adventurers did everything in their power to become members of the Fehme. One can visualize the reign of terror which followed as a consequence, and the blackmail, abuse, and mean

vengeance which it was possible to practice under the cloak of the Fehme. A man innocent of any crime would awaken to find a summons stuck to his door by some unknown person, calling for his appearance on a specific day before this or that tribunal of the Fehme. Such men knew that certain death awaited them there, and that they had better flee, or hide themselves as best they could. Another who had never been served by summons would one day unexpectedly be seized by three Freischoeffen, not aware that he had been condemned by the Fehme until he felt the noose around his neck.

The Junkers and the Fehme

This barbaric institution had terrorized Germany for centuries. One can imagine what services it could render to an unscrupulous group pursuing its own purposes and it was inevitable that such an institution should become the instrument for all sorts of private interests. When the Fehme returned to Germany following the 1918 Armistice, its reappearance was due to the initiative of two groups of interests, the Junkers and the leaders of heavy industry in Westphalia. In any event, every clue to the crimes of the revived Fehme uncovered by German tribunals or contemporary newspapers in their exposures led directly either to the Junkers or to heavy industry. Financing of the organizations responsible for the Fehmic crimes came from one or the other of these groups. A number of such crimes were committed on the very estates of the Junkers where numerous Fehme units were in hiding, available for Fehme activities. Moreover, the Prusso-Teutonic Junkers and officers seem to have been very directly involved in these crimes—to have been the immediate instigators. The rôle of the leaders of heavy industry was probably to finance such projects.

This cooperation consolidated the strange alliance which had been established between two such different economic

groups—Westphalian heavy industry and the Junkers—the existence of one based on the most modern industrial methods, of the other on the most backward exploitation.

In a description of the Prusso-Teutonic group of today, one really must include the heads of these industries, together with the Junkers, officers and officials previously cited. At the time of the Teutonic Order, nothing comparable to heavy industry existed. Today this industry is a force with which the descendants of the Order must reckon. There may have been some economic friction between the two groups during the period after World War I, when there was rivalry in connection with tariffs on agricultural products and manufactured goods. This, however, disappeared completely when Germany in 1931 established a system of absolute protectionism based on exchange control, which benefits equally both groups—big industrialists and landowners—at the expense of mercantile interests, small farmers and consumers. The warlike atmosphere dear to the Prusso-Teutonics is equally desirable to heavy industry, the logical supplier of munitions. (We shall draw no conclusions from the curious coincidence that the leaders of heavy industry in Germany are descendants of old Westphalian families. There is good reason to believe that in the Middle Ages their ancestors were members, perhaps even chiefs, of the Fehme movement, of Westphalian origin. In any case it is curious to note this fact concerning the alliance between the Junkers and heads of Westphalian heavy industry: these two groups are present-day descendants of men who participated in the two German institutions whose traditions most directly oppose Western civilization, the Teutonic Order and the Fehme.)

The renewal of the Fehme seemed to rest with the Junkers whose secret “self-defense” societies stemmed in a direct line from the ancient Society of Lizards and indirectly from the Teutonic Order. These societies were in a position to make an immediate decision to revive the Fehme terror—which was

indispensable to their aims—and then to organize it at once. Such a reign of terror would never have spread spontaneously, nor could it have resulted from the decision of a few members of the same caste on the spur of the moment.

The principal aim was to execute, one by one, the leaders of the young German Republic. Almost overnight the numerous sub-organizations, functioning under various names, became executors of the restored Fehme. Through their good offices hundreds of democratic leaders were put to death in post-war Germany. In the democratic nations outside of Germany, no attention was paid to these murders because they were considered a German “internal affair.”

All Fehme assassinations after 1918 can be traced back to the same organizations. The two groups which were the executors *par excellence* of Fehmic crimes were the “C” *Organization* (Consul) and the *Roszbach Organization*. All clues led to them. But the men active in both these organizations often figured as well in the activities of other societies or associations, all of which seemed to be pursuing the same ends and carrying out the same instructions. E. J. Gumbel, recognized specialist in the history of German political crimes after 1918, whom we have mentioned earlier, explains as follows the entanglement of interests existing among these various groups:

“The official program as well as the name [of these organizations] changes in accordance with what seems politically the most appealing at the moment. The real tendency, however, remains the same. Therefore it would be wrong to assume that all these societies existed individually side by side. In many cases one rose from another, and societies with entirely different names might be identical. For the same individuals made it a practice to hold simultaneous membership in a whole list of associations.

“The constant change of names often serves the purpose of veiling the complete structure of the organizations so as to

make practically ineffective any dissolution by order of the government or under pressure of public opinion. The purpose of the founding of new societies under new names and with new members was often to exclude those individuals who were no longer considered completely trustworthy, without provoking the enmity of such individuals by specifically expelling them."

The number of persons engaged in these activities cannot properly be estimated by adding up the members of the various existing associations, since there are numerous duplications in their lists. We can figure that at the most 200,000 individuals were active members of such organizations.

Here are the names of some of the societies of this character which abounded at this epoch. They often assumed professional or athletic guises, but always pursued the same secret ends. (Certain associations mentioned in this list preferred to keep their very existence secret):

Academic Werdandi Guild, General German Peoples Turnverein, Old Comrades (secret), Andreas-Hofer Bund, Arminius Bund, Arian Wandervogel, Bartelsbund, Bismarck Youth of the National German People's Party, German Veterans' Bund, Friends of Edda Bund, Bund of the Faithful, German Sailors Bund, New Pathfinders' Bund, German Wrestling Bund, German National Training Bund, German National Lawyers' Bund, Franconian Bund, Bund for German Rebirth, Bund for German Public Teachers, Christian German Revival, German Academic Guild of Nibelungen, German Oak, German Bund for Local Defense, German Women's Society of Ostmark, German Herold, German High School Circle, German Sailors, German Order, East German Bund, German Ostmark Society, German Employees' Bund, German Writing Bund, German Day, German Society for Rural Relief and Local Care, German Arms Bund, Society of German Faith, German Order's State, German Social

Employment Society, German Social Party, German Pathfinders' Bund, German National Academic Society, Siegfried Youth of the German Peoples, German National Youth Bund, German National Writers' Bund, German National Students' Bund, German Economics Bund, German Wandervogel, Eros (secret), Brotherhood of Travellers, United Field Artillery, Pine Tree Society, Irminsul Boys' Society, Frontbund (secret), Germania, Germania Ring, Germanic Faith Society, Germanic Conscience Society, Germanic Youth Bund, Society of Friends of Conscience, Society of National Germanic Morality, Geusen, Grail Bund, Seekers of the Homeland, Germans' Bund, Germans' Order (secret), Hubertus, Youth Group of German Kyffhäuser Bund, Jungborn Bund, Young German Pathfinders' Bund, Young Teachers' Bund of Baldu, Young National Bund, Innklub, Small Arms Society (secret), Knappenschaft, Kronacher Bund, Kultur Council, Mitgart Bund, National Society of German Officers, New Gobineau Society, Non-Jewish Bund, Aid Society (secret), Patriotic Veterans' Relief Society, Black-White-Red Reichbund, Reichsbund of Former Cadets, Reichs Gegenzins Bund, Reichs Hammer Bund, Reichs Officers' Bund, Order of German Legion of Honor, Schlageter Memorial Bund, Silver Shield (secret), Signal Bell, Tejabund, Bund of German Artists of Bavaria, Bund for a Better Life, Theodor Koerner Turnverein, The Bold (secret), Prince Bismarck Youth Bund of the Fatherland, Society of Friends of German Art, German Students' Society, National Women's Group, National Wandervogel Bund.

Through these societies the conspiracy secured useful associates in all circles of the population, but to these were revealed only small portions of the true aims. The real "acting agents" seemed to come from the Consul and Rossbach organizations, at least insofar as the actual assassinations were concerned.

Army and Navy Assassins

The assassins were all former officers, and in exceptional cases non-commissioned officers. When this curious fact was revealed in the course of the various trials and investigations concerning Fehme crimes in Germany, the public accepted without a murmur the too easy explanation that the war had lowered the moral standards of the combatants. In reality this state of affairs was due to nothing so simple, but to deeper causes: the Prussian officers, faithful members of the Prusso-Teutonic Caste were themselves obliged to take charge of these delicate tasks of the Fehme assassinations, since they were the only "men of arms" within the caste. In the traditional way of doing things, the other Junkers' rôle was to finance the various secret organizations with the aid of heavy industry and to provide them with hideouts on their estates; the officials who were devoted to the common cause were actively represented among the various police organizations, where they could help the assassins to escape, or if that proved impossible, to arrange, as prosecutors or judges, either their acquittal or their sentencing to an easy term. By 1918 Prusso-Teutonic affiliates could be found here and there among the officials of all German countries, even in places quite distant from Prussia. Since 1870 the Prussian spirit had had time to spread to a certain extent all over Germany.

The "bloody task," the actual killing, was considered the privilege of the officers—the descendants of the ancient Knights of the Order. The C Organization consisted primarily of former naval officers, the Rossbach Organization of army officers. Had a regular air force existed at the time of the first World War, it is probable that a third organization would have been formed, to be staffed by officers formerly active in that branch of service.

In 1920, the anti-Republic factions in Germany attempted

a vague *coup d'Etat*, known as the "Kapp Putsch." Corvette Captain Ehrhardt participated in this together with his naval brigade. Ehrhardt had succeeded in keeping this brigade in existence after 1918. He kept it functioning as an illegal organization. Its financing came through unknown interests whose identity can easily be guessed. A writ of arrest was issued against him in 1920 by authorities of the Republic but it was never executed. While the writ was still in effect Ehrhardt moved freely about the corridors of the Reichswehr Ministry. The official purpose of his discussions in the Ministry was "to find employment for his men." His real purpose was to elaborate quietly a scheme for collaboration between the Reichswehr and the future organization he had decided to found by using the men of his brigade as a nucleus. Since direct action in the "Kapp Putsch" had not had satisfactory results, he planned from that time on to devote his efforts to under-cover action. The newly created "C Organization," or "Consul Organization," was named for Ehrhardt who was its leader: in the secret code of the association each member had a special name and Ehrhardt was called "Consul."

Outstanding Germans often tried to fight the Consul Organization and the other secret associations, but in vain. On September 22, 1921, Dr. Trunk, President of the State of Baden, made the following revelations in the Diet of Baden concerning the by-laws and aims of the C Organization:

"The by-laws call for:

"(a) Spiritual aims: development and dissemination of national* thought; struggle against all anti-nationals and internationalists; struggle against Judaism, Social-Democracy and

* The word, "national," is used here as the antonym of "international." The German nationalistic circles considered the men behind the Weimar Constitution as "internationalists" and they looked upon themselves as the only ones who thought in "national" terms.

the radical left parties; struggle against the anti-nationally conceived Weimar Constitution by word, writing and action; enlightenment of the widest possible circles of the population as to the real nature of this Constitution; support of the only possible constitution for Germany, one based on Federalism.*

“(b) Material aims: Organization of men among the armed forces determined to prevent the complete revolutionizing of Germany; the prevention, through constitution of a *national* government, of the recurrence of present-day conditions; and, as far as possible, the preservation of armed forces as well as armaments for the nation.

“The organization is a secret one, the members of which are bound for mutual defense and protection through a pact by which every member of the organization is assured of the utmost assistance from all other members. The members pledge themselves to become a force to be reckoned with, so that when necessity, the honor of the Fatherland, and the realization of their aims demand it, they shall stand in the united strength of their closed ranks. Every member pledges absolute obedience to the organization’s leaders. Jews and in general men of foreign races are excluded from membership in the organization. Membership expires: (a) through death; (b) because of dishonorable activity; (c) because of disobedience to the leaders; (d) through voluntary withdrawal. *All members involved under (b) and (c) and all traitors are to be disposed of by the Fehme.* The pledge of allegiance reads: ‘I declare on my word of honor that I am of German descent. I pledge on my word of honor, and through a handclasp, that I will subject myself to the by-laws

* So long as the central power in Germany, following the events of 1918, rested in the hands of republican groups, the reactionary groups called themselves “Federalists.” When, following the rise of Hitler, power fell into their hands, they were to become supporters of centralization to a much greater extent than even the republicans.

and will act in accordance with them. I vow absolute obedience to the highest Leader of the organization, and to observe utmost secrecy concerning all its affairs.’”

During the trial in 1924, following the assassination of Rathenau, a zealous Reich prosecutor, Ebermayer, spoke as follows about the activities of the C Organization:

“I believe it my duty to point out that during the time of the investigation of the case and even immediately before the trial, a certain number of facts were produced which permit us to suppose and almost to conclude that certain organizations and societies are hiding behind the accused—and I go further, that they have perhaps inspired their crimes. I must emphasize above all that in all political outrages of the last few years, in the assassination of Erzberger, in the outrages against Scheidemann and in the assassination of Rathenau, which concerns us here, the same circles—I might almost say the same individuals—have always been involved. In the assassination of Erzberger—Schulz and Tillessen play a rôle; in the attempt against the life of Scheidemann, the brother of Tillessen was active. Tillessen, Plaass, Fischer, Kern, Schulz, Techow—all these men are the same group. All have widespread personal contacts—either because they have known each other for a long time or because they are all members of the different organizations. Thus, whether or not it is to our liking, we gain the impression of running up against the links of a common chain—of a single association to which all these men are affiliated.”

During the trial, the C Organization was seldom mentioned by name. The fear which checked the witnesses, the prosecution and the judges in speaking of it was clearly evident. The presiding judge mentioned, however, that during the closed hearings which had been ordered, the relationship between the C Organization and the Reich Government was discussed.

Everyone understood that in reality the matter of discussion was the relationship between the C Organization and the Reichswehr—this in reference to secret rearmament. The trial was conducted in such a way as to establish that the C Organization had rendered important “patriotic” services in the cause of secret rearmament and that under these conditions it would be preferable not to insist on denouncing the assassinations, which were not crimes but Fehmic executions. Finally all the accused were set free.

It is illuminating that in the following year, during another trial, the same prosecutor, Ebermayer, referred to the C Organization in an entirely different manner. To his mind, now, the Organization was not carrying on “secret activity.” It is true that it was struggling against the Weimar Constitution, but it was doing so through “legal means.” The intimidation of the Fehme had had its effect on the good prosecutor Ebermayer during the time between these two trials.

It has been established that there was a close connection between the Consul Organization and a whole series of associations serving as its “front” from time to time: Brueder vom Stein, Hauptverband der Schlesier, Bund der Aufrechten, Jungdeutscher Orden, Verband nationalgesinnter Soldaten, Nationalbund deutscher Offiziere, Bayrische Holzverwertungsgesellschaft, Norddeutscher Bund, a number of student societies and finally the *Wikingbund* (Viking Bund), an association which had some importance.

In 1923, the Press Bureau of the Thuringian government characterized this *Wikingbund* as follows:

“It appears that the National Association of German Soldiers, which was suppressed by law, has given rise to a substitute organization, the so-called *Wikingbund*, which at the same time functions as a branch of the Ehrhardt Brigade [Consul Organization]. Characteristic of the way in which ordinary members are deceived is the fact that, according to a declaration by a leader of the organization, no information

is allowed to be given out to unimportant members as to the connection between the *Wikingbund* and the C Organization. The *Wikingbund* as the ‘latest edition’ of the Consul Organization operating in Thuringia, inclusive of Prussian provinces, has been divided into eleven district sections which are directed from the regional office in the city of Erfurt. According to statements of individuals involved it has come out that there also exists a Fehme within the organization. The duty of the Fehme is to preserve through the most rigorous methods the secret character of the organization and of its activities. Members who are suspected of being traitors or ‘stool pigeons’ are shot, according to various statements of people who have participated in such actions. In the well-known manner of such bunds the members have to swear ‘life and death’ obedience to their leaders. It has been further established, according to confessions of individuals who have been arrested, that one of the purposes of these organizations is also to put out of the way any leader or statesman of the Republic who upsets their plans.”

The by-laws of the *Wikingbund*, drawn up in 1923, contain conclusive proof as to the connections of this Bund (and indirectly of the C Organization) with the *National-Socialist Party*. Among these by-laws is written:

“The Bund is an association of industrious German men; it strives on a national basis, for a moral, cultural, economic and political rebirth of the German people. The leader of the Bund is its founder, who shall have absolute authority. Membership is open to anyone who is above reproach and who is of Aryan German descent. On entering the Bund, each new member must take the oath of allegiance to the leader and his aims, pledging himself irrevocably to obedience. Sentences must be executed by those chosen for this purpose by the leader. *The political program is that of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party.** The Bund is a militant patriotic

* The italics are mine. P.W.

organization." This is signed: "B. Reiter, Leader and Founder of the *Wikingbund*."

A Job Well Done

The C Organization as a unit, or its members, can be traced in most of the post-war assassinations of outstanding political personalities. In the regulations of the revived Fehme, where the "punishment of traitors" is mentioned, not only those who actually betray secrets of any of the organizations involved are intended. All who wanted Germany to take the path of democracy were considered "traitors"—traitors because they opposed the direction desired by the Prusso-Teutonics, the only direction "worthy of a German"—according to the very particular understanding of this clique. Since they were traitors, they must be killed. . . . And as a result of this reasoning, the German democratic leaders were all disposed of, one by one. Of course the Fehme had even better reasons for acting promptly in cases such as that of the Bavarian Deputy Gareis in 1921, when Gareis threatened to expose the Fehme crimes and those responsible for them.

It must be admitted that the methods applied were effective. By 1920 all the democratic parties had lost their leaders through assassination. Those who remained at the head of these parties were men who had neither power nor prominence—and they were terrorized. (It is thus not surprising that the German emigration which followed Hitler's accession to power has not yet been able to produce an able leader from among the German statesmen of the different democratic parties.)

Thus the stage was set for the seizure of power by a group which would control Germany according to the desires of the Prusso-Teutonics and which would serve as a front to the latter. The Nazi Party, which was one of the candidates for this rôle, was mentioned more and more frequently. Less

and less was said about the Fehme crimes and the Consul Organization. Since the tasks entrusted to this organization had been finished the latter could now sink into oblivion.

By 1930 we can find the men who had been Ehrhardt's trusted lieutenants occupying important posts in the Navy, in the Administrative offices of the Admiralty and in the General Staff of the Fleet. Werner Tillessen, one of the foremost "men of many tasks" in the Consul Organization, whose name, together with that of his brother, had figured frequently during the course of most of the trials involving Fehme assassinations, was by then Vice-Admiral. Services rendered were well paid! When the officers had accomplished their tasks as Fehme assassins, they returned to the Army or the Navy—holding higher rank than before because of time passed in the performance of "duties of a special nature."

The Black Reichswehr

While the staff of the Consul Organization consisted of naval officers, that of the Rossbach Organization was composed of army officers. Both organizations worked hand and glove. No difficulties arose between them, and from time to time they lent each other their strong-arm men. The absence of conflict between these two terrorist groups, which one might expect to find competing with one another, can easily be explained by the fact that both organizations were acting in separate spheres but on behalf of the same controlling interests.

The C Organization was concerned primarily with disposing of major political figures—men in the public eye. The Rossbach Organization was dedicated to the execution of lesser lights, who might hinder the Junkers as well as the day-by-day work of secret rearmament. The C Organization functioned throughout Germany, and was particularly active in areas where a certain strengthening of the democratic

parties was noticed. The Rossbach Organization was more active in Prussia itself, looking after the local interests of the Junkers, on whose estates the units of the organization had been set up. Therefore the connections of the Rossbach Organization with the Junkers were of necessity more apparent than those maintained with the same interests by the C Organization.

The Rossbach Organization was founded in December, 1918, by Lieutenant Gerhard Rossbach of the 175th Infantry Regiment with the remnants of his regiment. He tried to keep together the men who rallied around him after the débâcle by hiding them on the estates of the East-Prussian landlords. Out of this a few months later Rossbach formed a "Sturmtruppe" (assault troop), now admitting to membership officers and soldiers from all the armed forces. The Rossbach forces called themselves an "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" (work cooperative) to conceal the military character of their organization from the Armistice Commission. They were to be placed in small units on the estates of the Junkers where they would carry out their activities.

The Junkers had decided to hide on their estates the implements of war which the army was able to salvage after Germany's defeat. For the Prusso-Teutonics these were a powerful trump, to be used in the future reconstruction of their forces. They had no doubts as to this reconstruction, although they did not yet see clearly the exact form it would take.

It is enlightening that the secret rearming, which was being carried on in defiance of the Armistice Commission, took place mainly on the very estates of the Junkers (*i.e.*, in the only section of Germany controlled entirely by the Prusso-Teutonics). It is also interesting that all Junkers thus placed their lands at the disposal of the cause without a moment's hesitation; and that not one traitor was to be found among them who dared to oppose the shouldering of these obligations or to carry tales to the democratic parties. The reason

for this lay in the strict secret organization of the Junkers. If this secret organization had not existed, a simple "community of interests," would certainly not have been enough to force decisions so rapidly and to insure secrecy and perfect synchronization of all actions.

The only leakage which the Junkers had reason to fear might have come from their farm workers. The latter, of course, unlike the Junkers, were not bound by the secrecy of the Junker organizations. They were, further, in a position to know and reveal the spots where arms had been hidden. It was a question, then, of terrorizing these workers and impressing on them the fact that by talking too much they would be risking the wrath of the Fehme. The organization of this Fehme unit was the task of the various "work cooperatives" composed of ex-service men. Among these "cooperatives," the Rossbach Organization soon became outstanding by virtue of the initiative and ruthlessness of its leader.

Collectively these secret units were known as the "Black Reichswehr." Indeed, their purpose was to keep together the staffs of the former army. These staffs could not remain in the official Reichswehr, which had been considerably reduced in accordance with the terms of the Armistice. A close liaison was maintained between the two Reichswehr. This was considerably facilitated by the fact that officers of both were serving the same cause and obeying the same orders.

An Honorable Enterprise

The Rossbach Organization established central offices in Berlin. It was from here that recruiting was carried on and that contact was maintained with leaders of the Reichswehr. These offices themselves organized a front known as the "Deutsche Auskunftei" (German Information Bureau). The Deutsche Auskunftei was under the official direction of Lieutenant Rossbach, and one can imagine what was meant by the

official description of the services rendered: "Investigations, Shadowing, Escorted Journeys." The prospectus of the bureau contained the following directions:

DEUTSCHE AUSKUNFTEI

Main Business Office: Berlin Wannsee, Otto W. Erichstrasse 10;
 Open Day and Night. Telephone Wannsee 613 and 793
 Branch Office: Berlin W 62, Bayreutherstrasse 10—3rd floor.
 Business Hours: 10—4. Telephone Steinplatz 11663
 Agents and Representatives sent out on your request by phone
 Private automobile service from Berlin or Wannsee Terminal on
 request
 Cable Address: Deutsche Auskunft Wannsee
 Bank References: F. W. Krause & Co. Berlin W Behrenstrasse 2.
 Industrie und Landwirtschafts Bank Berlin, Markgrafenstrasse
 35
 Criminal Division: Criminal Police Inspector Wilss (retired)
 Political Division: Executive Director—First Lieutenant Rossbach
 (retired)—Major von Berthold
 Information, Stock Exchange and Cashiers' Division: Director M.
 L. Eberhardt
 Guards and Protection Division: First Lieutenant D. H. Lukash
 (retired)
 Legal Department: Major Bartold (retired)—Kurt Oskar Bark,
 Editor
 Telephone Service connects with all departments.

The German democratic press of that period tried in vain to unmask the Deutsche Auskunftei by demonstrating that all its resources were of Junker-Prussian origin; that it had been organized to provide those forces with strong-arm men—the so-called "detachments of guards" for their estates; and that it had been responsible for all Fehme assassinations in Prussia east of the Elbe.

If a Prussian landlord had the slightest difficulty with his farm workers, if he suspected them of wanting to organize a strike or of wishing to betray the rearmament activities, the

"Rossbach volunteers" would show up immediately and attack the workers, with clubs; they would not hesitate to kill those who might become too troublesome. All "volunteers" were armed with guns, knives and blackjacks. They were obedient to the strictest military discipline, going so far as to snap into "at attention" in the presence of their superior officers, although they were generally in mufti.

Despite the name, "Work Cooperative," they were not concerned with any actual work. In a tight spot, however, the Rossbach volunteers were prepared to furnish large armed forces at almost a moment's notice.

Petty Executions

The responsibility of the Rossbach Organization for some of the assassinations was clearly established in the course of trials which also ended without any significant results. The democratic press conducted inquiries and made some interesting revelations. Gumbel tried very hard to demonstrate the connecting links between all these Fehme assassinations but his efforts did not arouse public opinion.

In July, 1920, the non-commissioned officer Max Krueger, of the Rossbach corps stationed at Stecklin, learned that one of the farm workers, Willi Schmidt, age twenty, wanted to abandon his job—and that it was being whispered in the village that he intended to inform the police of the spot where certain secret arms had been cached. The local Fehme of the Rossbach corps decided to take action immediately.

Four members of the organization, Heines, Bandemer, Vogt and Ottow, paid a visit to Schmidt, pretending to be police inspectors. Intimidated, Schmidt left with them, supposedly to attend a hearing at the police station. Actually he was led to an isolated spot in the vicinity and there Ottow beat him over the head with a blackjack. It was decided to take him to the Kehrberg forest and his wounds were dressed. On the way

there Schmidt tried to draw the attention of passers-by and cried out: "They want to kill me." No one paid any attention to him.

Two other members of the Rossbach corps, Baer and Fraebel, now joined the others. At last Heines ordered Baer to shoot Schmidt. Baer could not quite make up his mind, so Heines himself shot at Schmidt twice. He was joined by Ottow, who also fired twice. Schmidt still had sufficient strength to cry out for help. He was knocked down and his face was pushed into the ground. Fraebel trampled on his head and finally Ottow finished him off with ten raps of the blackjack.

Baer now dug a pit in which the corpse was buried. But the pit was not deep enough. A few days later the knees of the victim pushed up out of the ground and people in the neighborhood began to speak of the assassination. After that the assassins went back to the grave and buried their victim in a much deeper pit.

Walter Cadow, age twenty-three, employed as overseer on an estate at Wismar in Mecklenburg, had been admitted into membership in the local Rossbach volunteers, having been a second lieutenant during the war. After some time he was suspected of intending to turn witness against the Rossbach Organization, in a trial concerning the Organization's activities, then in session.

On May 31, 1923, following previous arrangements, members of the local Fehme got him drunk, and then all his papers were removed. It was midnight. He was placed in a car with eight men, who, under the command of Second Lieutenant Hoess, held their guns against him. The car was driven out to the woods. Cadow was dragged out, stunned by blackjack blows, and, dripping with blood, was put back into the car. They now drove him to a clearing, where he was knocked to the ground. The entire gang trampled him with booted feet.

One of these men, Wiedemeyer, slit his throat, and Second Lieutenant Hoess finally killed him with a bullet in the head.

Jurisch, one of the members of this particular unit, later became remorseful and recounted the incident to the *Vorwaerts*—socialist newspaper of Berlin. The crime was thus brought to the attention of the attorney-general, who could not refuse to act. Two minor helpers in the assassination, as well as the informer, were arrested. Finally all three were released.

The local chief of the Rossbach Organization hurriedly transported those who had participated in the assassination to other estates in Upper Silesia. He thus made sure that the affair would have no further repercussions. Later it was learned that he reprimanded Hoess, leader of the unit, severely: "If you had been a member of the Rossbach Organization for a longer time, you would have known how such affairs should be handled. Two men and one bullet—at night in the woods—are all that is needed."

Around 1922-1923, the Rossbach Organization found means of introducing its methods into the Reichswehr itself. In numerous areas throughout Germany, local cells were organized within the regular army. These cells were named "Reichswehrblock Rossbach" (R. W. B. R.)—Rossbach Reichswehr Section. Indiscretions had exposed the relations between the Rossbach Organization and a certain regiment of Magdeburg. Following this, the local R. W. B. R. issued, in May, 1932, the following command (later revealed by the Left press):

"In the name of the Chief: In view of the prevailing espionage, the leaders have decided to form a so-called Fehme-unit. This will be composed only of trustworthy men, who have been trained in pistol shooting, and shall be under the direct command of the leaders. It will be the duty of the Fehme to observe the movement of those who appear suspect to the

leaders and to dispose of traitors as well as politically undesirable individuals. Because of the difficulties of this work, and the great demands it makes, only the most reliable and trustworthy men are to be chosen."

Fehme assassinations increased in number within the Reichswehr and the various Black Reichswehr organizations. The magazine *Das andere Deutschland* published in its issue of January, 1927, the following "confession":

"I, the undersigned, Hubert Caida, worker at Wreschen, was, in 1921, a member of the 'self-defense' organization, section Dedewitzhof, near to Twerkau, district of Ratibor. On the night of the 18th or 19th of May, 1921, I, along with another member of the organization, received orders from Lieutenant Petrich to follow the tavern proprietor Miketta, from Dedewitzhof to Benkowitz, and to shoot him dead, somewhere along the way. On the road from Dedewitzhof to Twerkau, Miketta walked a few steps in front of us, his hands in his pockets, smoking his pipe, and without suspicion. We said that we would accompany him right up to the door of his house where his wife awaited his return. Miketta was three steps ahead of me when, in accordance with my instructions, I shot him in the head. He died on the spot. I am sorry to have killed Miketta, but I thought I had to carry out the orders of my superior, Lieutenant Petrich.

"Wreschen, November 27, 1926
Hubert Caida."

Erich Pannier, a young baker aged twenty-one, was active in a Ruhr detachment of the Black Reichswehr in 1923. He became suspect to his superiors and when, in May, 1923, he did not return from a leave within the required time, Sergeant Schirmann was sent out after him, arresting him at the home of his parents. On the street, Pannier slipped away from Schir-

mann, cried out for help from the Black Reichswehr, and begged a policeman to protect him. Despite protestations by the Sergeant, who showed his papers to the policeman, the latter conducted Pannier to the police station. The commissioner there telephoned the general staff of the Third Army Division, requesting instructions. He was told that a second lieutenant would be sent over immediately to call for Pannier. Later a second lieutenant and another man presented themselves to the commissioner, and they took custody of Pannier, whom they then led away. The commissioner did not realize that the officer was really Second Lieutenant Benn of the Black Reichswehr. (In the course of the trial, where these incidents were revealed, it was never explained how a telephone call to the general staff of a regular division of the German army could have led to the dispatching of men of the Black Reichswehr.) Two days later, on orders of Benn, Pannier was killed in the woods with an axe by Sergeant Schirmann and Privates Aschenkampf and Stein.

The day following the crime, Schirmann left for Berlin carrying a letter addressed to Lieutenant Paul Schulz, whose name figures in many of these assassinations. Schulz seems to have been one of the principal organizers of the Black Reichswehr Fehme. Sergeant Fahlbusch, who made accusations against Schulz during the course of a trial of Fehme crimes, was later, in January, 1931, found asphyxiated in a motor boat. His death was never cleared up.

The Nazis and the Fehme

It is curious to observe the relationship between the post-war Fehme organizations and the Nazi party. That numerous murderers from the C Organization, the Rossbach Organization and the various detachments of the Black Reichswehr became members of the Nazi party around 1930, is in itself not astonishing. It can be explained simply by the general

attraction which the party held for the masses, and particularly among nationalist elements. But we have seen how, as early as 1923, the Wikingbund, closely connected to the C Organization, adopted in its statutes the program of the National-Socialist party as its political ideal. On the other hand, Rossbach was official representative for Hitler in North Germany during this same period. When the police of Thuringia on January 26, 1923, arrested 373 members of the Rossbach Organization, including forty officers (as related in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of January 28, 1923), it was discovered that all of them were to report to the Congress of the National-Socialist party, convening in Munich. The police found numerous guns and blackjacks on the men, and in many cases they wore uniforms beneath their civilian clothes. A great many of them wore swastikas.

In 1923, the Nazi party was not yet as feared and as influential as it was to be at a later time. Nevertheless the two powerful Fehme associations, the C Organization and the Rossbach Organization, maintained consistent connections with it. This was due only to the fact that all three organizations were agencies acting for the same group of interests.

The ties of the C Organization with the Junkers and with the Reichswehr, loyal servants of the Prusso-Teutonics, were clearly revealed during the course of various trials. That there was a connection between the Rossbach Organization and the Prussian landlords was an open secret, since almost all of their activity had taken place on lands of the latter. It is clear that by maintaining a regular relationship with both organizations, the Nazi party was cultivating its connections with the hidden powers which were at the same time behind both organizations—the entire Junker-Prussian clique.

Yet there had been reason to believe from time to time that the Nazi movement would one day come to a head in a *separatist* revolt of the different German regions against Prussian centralization. This was true especially when Hitler

—in the beginning of his movement—had close ties with the Bavarian separatists under the leadership of Kahr. The Number Two leader of the Nazi party, Gregor Strasser, thought he could maintain great independence with respect to the Prusso-Teutonic forces. Captain Roehm deluded himself with the idea that his "Praetorian Guards," the S. A., were sufficiently strong to enable the party to realize its own ends without the necessity of submitting to any outside forces. Hitler himself, entirely without scruples, did not oppose his lieutenants. He welcomed *all* alliances, and *all* slogans, so long as these might be of value to him. Basically, he was never under any illusion as to what were the truly dominant forces in Germany. He knew very well that his assumption of power in Germany some day would be made possible only if he gave these forces absolute guarantees that he would serve them faithfully from the moment he had the controls.

Despite his passing flirtations in other directions, Hitler wisely maintained contacts with the Prusso-Teutonic elements through Rossbach and Ehrhardt, and through his own henchman, Goering. This state of affairs continued until the time in 1932 and particularly in January, 1933, when he concluded a "life and death" alliance with the Junker forces. This became possible only after the "neutralization" of Hindenburg, who alone among these elements had, up to that time, refused to approve the choice of the Austrian corporal as the "super factotum" selected to serve the Prussian cause.

As early as 1924, when appearances ran counter to the conclusion he set down, E. J. Gumbel in his book, *Verschwoerer*, published in Berlin, had written the following:

"In its deepest foundations, National-Socialism contains but little more than Prussian militarism."

CHAPTER V

THE PRUSSO-TEUTONICS APPROACH THEIR GOAL

ON THE FIRST OF OCTOBER, 1927, two extremely dignified gentlemen in frock coats and striped trousers called on Marshal Hindenburg, President of the German Republic. They were the "secret adviser" (Geheimrat) Duisberg, head of the famous chemical firm I. G. Farben and one of the leaders of German big industry; and the royal chamberlain, Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau, mouthpiece of the Junkers and official representative of the Reichs-Landbund, the Junker agricultural organization. They came to present to Hindenburg a "gift from the German economy"—title to the Neudeck estate, castle and grounds.

Neudeck had belonged to the Hindenburgs from the time of Frederick the Great, though the Marshal himself had never owned landed property. Tomorrow the whole country would be celebrating his eightieth birthday and on this occasion the Junkers and big industry had decided to restore the estate of his ancestors to him.

A Stroke of Genius

The idea had been conceived by the designing Oldenburg-Januschau, who was a close friend of Hindenburg. This "king's chamberlain" was a kind of liaison officer to the Marshal, permanently delegated by the Junker organization to safeguard their interests in the Presidential office. Oldenburg had worked effectively. The contribution of the Junkers to the cost of the gift was trifling. The greater part of the funds came from big manufacturers, whose purse-strings were

looser than those of the Prussian landlords, always in debt. Nevertheless the moral benefit of this princely gift to the Marshal-President would revert equally to both groups. In this there was a certain justice: the industrialists had supplied the money, the Junkers the idea.

Industrialists and Junkers were hoping by this gesture to obtain a stronger hold on Hindenburg. But the Junkers hoped to secure an additional advantage of their own. By being transformed from an army officer without property into a landowner, Hindenburg would become a genuine Junker like his forebears. He would have the same day-to-day economic anxieties as they, and would be better qualified to understand their ideas and aspirations.

Bismarck himself had been a great landlord, owner of three domains: Schoenhausen, Friedrichsruh, and Varzin. His entire economic policy conformed to the special interests of the Junkers. Under his regime import duties on agricultural products were steadily increased, to the disadvantage of other classes of the population. Under his successor, however, things had gone less smoothly.

A Junker Who Forgot to Be a Junker

When the young and impetuous William II decided that Bismarck should retire, he replaced him by Count von Caprivi, a general, member of a Junker family, who at first had the confidence of Prusso-Teutonic groups. But Caprivi possessed no fortune of his own; he was simply a soldier. Moreover, he pursued economic policies directly opposed to what the Junkers believed to be their interest. Between 1892 and 1894 he concluded commercial treaties which represented evolution toward free trade with Austria-Hungary, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Roumania, Serbia, and Russia. They provided for a decrease in duties on imported agricultural products, in exchange for similar concessions granted by the

various countries for admitting manufactured goods which Germany wished to export.

Young German industry was happy, and the public gladly experienced a general reduction in the cost of living. But the Junkers were furious. Because of their unprogressive methods of exploiting their soil they could make profits only if they could sell their products at exorbitant prices, artificially bolstered by high import duties. So they decided on the fall of von Caprivi who had become increasingly *persona non grata* to them.

A campaign of unusual violence was launched against the chancellor. Finally in October, 1894, the Emperor, while visiting on the estate of Count von Eulenberg, one of the most influential Junkers of the time, decided without apparent reason to recall Caprivi. The "powers behind the throne" had received full satisfaction.

Hindenburg became President of the German Republic in 1925. Descendant of an old Junker family, he was elected with the support of the Junker class, but once in power he seemed at times to forget that his sole duty in his new office was to serve the special interests of some 13,000 Prussian lords.

True it was that Hindenburg, like Caprivi, owned no land. His fidelity to Junker principles, therefore, originated simply in the traditional alliance between the corps of Prussian officers and the Junker class, and not in any direct personal interest. For an officer younger than Hindenburg, the entangled interests of the Reichswehr and Junker organizations might have been an argument strong enough to warrant total submission to orders from the manor lords. But Hindenburg was a hero of the Great War as well as President of the Republic, elected for a term of seven years at the age of 78. He could therefore consider himself sufficiently independent to act merely as one who wished to leave posterity the recollection of a man devoted to the public interest.

At the beginning of his term as President, Hindenburg

seemed unwilling to accept orders from anyone, and, in spite of his antecedents, was ready to serve the Republic faithfully. The Republican parties were agreeably surprised, but this independence was unbearable to the Junker class. It had to be stopped at all costs. Neudeck was the bait held out to him. By one operation Hindenburg was made a debtor of the Junker class and heavy industry. In addition to this, as owner of a great estate in East Prussia he was henceforth to have the same worries and interests as other Junkers. The case of Caprivi had been a lesson, and the remedy found was an excellent one.

A Fruitful Alliance

The alliance between Junkers and big industry in this overture to Hindenburg was not an innovation. It was the same fruitful cooperation which we have seen at work behind the Fehme murders. At first glance the interests of the two economic classes do not appear identical. The Junkers favored high tariffs on agricultural products to prevent competition, while it was to the advantage of industrialists to conclude commercial treaties facilitating exportation and allowing in exchange importation of agricultural products. In signing his series of commercial treaties Caprivi had yielded to considerations of the latter sort.

But German industrialists of 1927 were no longer like those of 1892. The latter saw their future in natural expansion of their export markets, in healthy competition with manufacturers of other countries. The industrialists of 1927 had already been brought into line by the Junkers. They had been made to understand that as German manufacturers they need not think along the lines of Anglo-Saxon economy. In free competition with foreign industries they could hope at best to secure one of the three first ranks in world markets. But Germany, according to Prusso-Teutonic schemes, should not

be content with one of the first places, but ought to obtain *complete domination of all markets*.

The plan for achieving this purpose was simple. Instead of facilitating trade with other parts of the world by concluding commercial treaties which successively lowered tariffs, they must, on the contrary, increase duties on imports and set themselves apart from the rest of the world. (Later this isolation was to be effected much more thoroughly with the aid of exchange control introduced under Bruening's regime by Dr. Luther and perfected under Hitler by Dr. Schacht: control of exchange which subjects all importing to the control of the State.) The plan anticipated the following stages: economic isolation; considerable rise in cost of living; misery and discontent of the people; blame traced back to parliamentary institutions and the Allied nations; then a twofold result: discredit of parliamentary institutions and rearmament.

At this point industrialists were promised these advantages: huge arms orders as an ample compensation for lost export business; high tariffs on imported products of heavy industry; successive subsidies by the State to German industry to allow a certain amount of exporting as a method of dumping (in exchange the State obtained foreign currencies which it needed even with control of exchange); and finally, because of discontent of the people and as a result of rearmament, war; then conquest by blood and fire of new territories, each becoming an economic outlet totally submissive to German control.

The Right Kind of Competition

In this line of reasoning the point of view of the Hanseatic League no longer prevailed. That ancient trading association of free German cities had struggled to gain control of world markets by every legitimate means of free commerce. The Hansa's contests with English merchants had been sharp but

honorable for centuries, and had been carried on according to rules identical on both sides. The League, if its traditions had prevailed in the economic life of Germany, might indeed have become a real threat to other countries in the markets of the world, because German merchants were ingenious and industrious. But that threat would have been perfectly legitimate, conforming to the rules of the game of economic competition, and would have stimulated the competitors of the Hansa merely to show greater ingenuity in their turn.

The new economic plan had been conceived in order to produce a threat to Germany's competitors of an entirely different sort. It was no longer a matter of playing the game fairly to win as much as one could from one's opponent, but of overpowering him and taking everything away from him. The Junkers had succeeded in getting German industrialists to accept their robber-barons' tactics and discard traditional Hanseatic methods from the German economic scheme.

There is a time-honored conflict between the two principles. In the middle of the fifteenth century the bloody war of the German Hanseatic cities against the Order had had its origin in the same conflict. In 1466 the Hanseatic cities had been victorious over the Teutonic Knights. In the twentieth century the descendants of those Knights, the Junker class, succeeded in driving the Hanseatic economic concept out of Germany.

World Dominion or Ruin

The Junkers were anxious to have a good presentation for their "new economic theories." Prusso-Teutonic theorists of the nineteenth century had supplied the necessary presentation and at the same time an exact outline for applying their plan. (We have seen the advantage they managed to derive from the economic theories of List, put into practice by Dr. Schacht.)

But if that "presentation" had been useful in getting their plan accepted by the rest of Germany, including the industrialists, the Junkers were concerned with something simpler: their own immediate interests. These immediate interests demanded higher tariffs on the import of agricultural products to allow them to raise their prices and make greater profits. Their concern was to perpetuate the comfort in which they had lived as long as they were able to profit by the virtual famine that reigned in Germany during the post-war years. Here is what a German writer, Rudolf Olden (*Hindenburg*, Paris, 1935) says on the subject:

"The famine which continued in greater and lesser degree until 1924 had been the big opportunity for German agriculture, a period of easy success and luxury for everybody who produced comestibles. Hardly had this time passed when the great landowners immediately asked for protective tariffs. On this point also Germany stood at the crossroads. On the one side fulfillment of the Treaty of Versailles, peace, disarmament, flourishing of commerce and industry, cultural progress, satisfied labor; on the other side, high tariffs for grain and wine, isolation from the world market, refusal to make reparations payments, rearmament, class struggle from above, provocation of a war of revenge."

One may clearly discern the precise plan of Prusso-Teutonic organizations, the secret Junker societies, behind the "unilinear operations" of the Great Elector, of Frederick the Great, of Bismarck, of William the Second and of those who, under the Weimar Republic, conducted the Fehme and prepared in secret for rearmament. The extraordinary homogeneity of these operations would of itself suffice as indication of their common origin. But one need not imagine that 13,000 Prussian manorial lords—*i.e.*, all the Junkers—had been initiated into the full scope of the plan. That is not the way secret societies work.

The Junker class as a whole, assembled in the "professional

organization" known as the Reichs-Landbund, and in the social and political society known as the Herrenklub, envisaged only their immediate interests. But those interests had been presented to them in such a way that they coincided with the combination of goals pursued. The procedure was simple enough. The Junkers wished to isolate themselves from the rest of the world in the matter of importing products of the soil, in order to sell their own at higher prices. To attain their purpose, they needed the political support of heavy industry; and to obtain that support they had to make promises to industry as to the rearmament program. Moreover, they had to introduce into every German economic circle a complete plan that would encompass the realization of their own immediate ends.

This complete plan lay ready for use. It was an elaboration of the precise plan that had directed every phase of Prussian growth, the plan which had inspired the fantastic dreams of the Prusso-Teutonic writers of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth. This plan evidently satisfied the imagination of the Junker class as a whole, but to them it was fundamentally only a fortunate way of presenting their most immediate and much more limited purposes. The Junkers had to make every influential group in Germany accept the idea that for their country it was a matter of life or death to embark on a course of world conquest. The theory, "world dominion or ruin," came anew to the surface, and they attempted to make people believe that the fate of all Germany was at stake in this breath-taking dilemma. Actually if anyone was threatened with ruin it would be only the 13,000 Junkers—ruin which the Junkers could have avoided by other means: by modernizing their farm operations and restricting expenditures. But such modernization and restrictions were inconceivable to these feudal lords. To avoid them all Germany had to be drawn into an interminable period of "cannon versus butter," and strife with the rest of the world.

The "Osthilfe" Scandal

The "gift from the German economy" given Hindenburg in 1927 in the form of the domain of Neudeck was to provide the Junker class with a hold over the octogenarian Hindenburg profitable in many respects. Several irregularities came about in connection with the gift. First of all, it was arranged to save on the transfer taxes. Taxes on gifts as valuable as Neudeck were extremely high, amounting to 44 per cent of the assessed value. The revenue authorities allowed themselves to be persuaded to make an exception and formally waive these taxes on the ground that Neudeck was a kind of "national gift."

This exemption could have been vaguely justified if it had actually been a matter of transferring property to the name of the Marshal-President. However, the deed to the property was not recorded in the name of Marshal Paul von Hindenburg but in that of his son and aide-de-camp, Colonel Oscar von Hindenburg. Indubitably it was a matter of avoiding the inheritance tax in the eventuality, probably close, of the aged Marshal's death. Neudeck was worth a million marks; the inheritance taxes saved in addition to the gift taxes mentioned above amounted to 100,000 marks. Incidentally, by registering the property in Colonel Hindenburg's name the Marshal's other children were deprived of their rights.

The Marshal, entirely under his son's influence, offered no resistance. He did not realize that each of these irregularities opened a door through which pressure could later be brought to bear on him. Henceforth he could no longer allow himself the luxury of being a President caring only about the national interest. If he had ever dreamed (ingenuous thought!) of being able to free himself of his antecedents, and of acting simply as a soldier and German statesman, *not* as a Junker, he must now dispel that dream. He sank to the level of the other Junkers. He became their partner of destiny in a "combine," disclosure of which might well embarrass him because

of his position much more than it could embarrass the instigators of the transaction.

Oscar von Hindenburg had a fatal influence on his father. Eager to take advantage of his exceptional position, he was part of every political combination between 1925 and 1933. It was an open secret in Berlin that one could easily get what one wanted from the Marshal by being on good terms with the Colonel. Member of the Herrenklub, the "social front" of the Junker class, where details of political deals were debated day in and day out, Oscar in the end was completely dominated by the Prusso-Teutonics.

On his eightieth birthday the Marshal, now a landowner, was exultant. He was enjoying Neudeck as a child enjoys a new toy. His dream at last had come true. He would no longer be a poor officer without soil or root. This was what had troubled him so during his youth when he used to compare himself with his more fortunate army comrades. If he wished to relax from his wearying duties he could now rest in his own castle, hunt on his own grounds; and when he died he could leave this lovely estate to his son. The latter would have the advantage of it at an age when the father had had to be content with being a poor guest on the property of friends.

At Neudeck Hindenburg was the neighbor of Oldenburg-Januschau. The two saw more and more of each other and the Marshal had an even more attentive ear than before for the suggestions of the man whom he considered his benefactor. Oldenburg in his conversations emphasized the "difficulties of agriculture." Indeed, the golden age which had reigned for the Junker class, due to the famine in Germany, had come to an end. The Junkers could no longer sell their products at exorbitant prices and profit by the misery of others. Their yields on the agricultural market at current prices were no longer enough to allow them to continue the extravagant living and drunken carousing to which they were accustomed.

A good share of Junker money was also going to finance illegal detachments of the Black Reichswehr concealed on their properties. All this was no longer possible with the reduced finances which the Prussian lords now had at their disposal. Besides, they were running further and further into debt.

Hindenburg, who was touched by Oldenburg's recital of the "misfortunes of agriculture," consented to intervene with the government to find a possible remedy. This was how the famous *Osthilfe* (Eastern Aid) was created, a fund amounting to 250 million marks. The avowed purpose of the *Osthilfe* was to "come to the aid of small farmers and peasants who had been ruined in the period of inflation." But in the few years of its existence *Osthilfe* money brought about the "refinancing" of some 10,500 big Junker manor lords (of the entire 13,000), by payment of their debts and by according them new credits on practically unlimited terms. On the other hand, Rudolf Olden shows that of two million average farmers, only one out of forty-five received loans, and of three million small farmers in Germany, not one obtained a thing. Accordingly, tremendous bitterness arose among the peasant class on the subject of the *Osthilfe*.

Von Oldenburg-Januschau himself received over 600,000 marks from the *Osthilfe*. When certain people hinted later that he had gotten so much because of his initiative in the matter of the Neudeck gift, others pointed out that when a person bears the name von Oldenburg-Januschau he needs no further argument to get a heavy slice of the cake.

The distribution of funds was in the hands of Junker officials. Investment of the money was carried out by a so-called "guarantee procedure" (*Sicherungsverfahren*) directed by trustees appointed for this purpose. All the trustees were Junkers who in their turn were profiting by the refinancing of their own properties. Thus neighbors superintended each other, and made mutual grants of large sums.

One of the duties of the trustees was supposed to be to verify that the money granted under the title "debt repayment" actually went to creditors. However, creditors found themselves generally deprived of the greater part of their equity, with very small hope of ever seeing their money.

Some big Junker landowners were refinanced as many as four times, each time declaring their estates bankrupt in order to rid themselves of all indebtedness. Frequently this did not prevent their having money on the side, invested in prosperous businesses. Others continued their reckless spending in accordance with the old Junker custom. When refinancing was no longer possible in their own names they transferred their estates to the names of members of their families, frequently minors, and the same game went on *ad infinitum*.

The development of semi-military organizations gained new intensity with the aid of this manna from Heaven distributed by the *Osthilfe*. A deputy speaking of these abuses before the Prussian Parliament said:

"The concealment and feeding of SA groups, of Stahlhelm troops and similar organizations, showy festivities on the occasion of Nazi and Deutsch-national electoral successes, excessive personal expenditures and other similar things could continue on a wide scale everywhere because of the good offices of the 'guarantee procedure.'"

Throughout Germany people began to whisper at first, then to talk more openly of the "*Osthilfe* scandal." The names of Hindenburg and his son were frequently mentioned in this connection, and it was said that being on friendly terms with the Colonel was sufficient to obtain ample sums from the *Osthilfe*. Olden, Hindenburg's biographer, says:

"A great number of Hindenburg's neighbors or people from the same social group as he—friends, or friends of friends—directly contacted the President or his son. All old Prussia came to new life. What counted was whether you belonged to the same Regiment, to the same student frater-

nity, from what period your family had lived in a certain neighborhood, whose cousin or in-law one was. . . . Friendships and cliques looked for and found their way into the Palace of the President of the Reich. Junkers managed to be recommended to the source whence the flow came. The landlords from east of the Elbe [*i.e.*, the Junkers] had always—at all periods of their history—been insatiable. They hurled themselves gluttonously upon the overflowing abundance.”

The Osthilfe scandal, and later that of Neudeck, hovered in the background of the history of the governments preceding the Hitler regime. The Catholic Centrum party and the Socialists stirred up the scandal, cautiously at first, then with more courage. This created great uneasiness among the Junker class. But even the Nazis, directly or indirectly, made revelations concerning these matters in order to keep attention focused on them. It was because of the continual pressure thus exerted on the Junker class and Hindenburg that the Nazis were finally able to seize power and maintain their position with Junker support.

A Paralyzed Parliament

From March, 1930, until May, 1932, Dr. Heinrich Brüning was Chancellor of the Reich. He came from the movement of Christian labor syndicates, was a devout Catholic and member of the Centrum party. In principle he was opposed to the Junker class, as was his party. Actually, he could stay in power only so long as he tolerated their abuses and resigned himself to act, in spite of his better feelings, in accordance with Junker schemes. He had to yield office as soon as he tried to prove himself independent of them.

When Brüning took office the democratic parties of Germany had already lost all initiative. The Fehme, faithful tool of the Prusso-Teutonic class, had suppressed the most enterprising democratic leaders and intimidated the rest. This had

brought about sterility in parliament. The democratic parties, dispossessed and without true leaders, could do no constructive work, opposed as they were by an extremely active and Machiavellian Nazi minority. This was all the Junkers could ask. They had succeeded in suppressing their most dangerous opponents. If parliament (which they detested, though they had been forced to tolerate it from Bismarck's time on) now wound up by making a fool of itself and becoming paralyzed, nothing could give them greater delight.

Brüning, not knowing how to govern with an impotent Reichstag, resigned himself to using an expedient which he was able to devise in accordance with provisions of the Weimar constitution. He decided to introduce a system of decree-laws, *i.e.*, decrees which had the force of law and depended merely on the signature of the President of the Republic. True, he was obliged to submit these decree-laws later for approval of the Reichstag, but if this approval should be refused he could immediately dismiss the Reichstag by using a decree of dissolution signed in advance by the President. Comparative parliamentary stability lasted, therefore, only under permanent threat of such dissolution.

President Hindenburg thus became the source of all power. He had already become accustomed to giving orders to politicians who had access to him, treating the Chancellor and members of the government the way a commander-in-chief treats his staff officers in time of war. So great was the respect which this military chief inspired in the Germans that no one found anything amiss. From now on his power became still more absolute. But Hindenburg in turn was under the influence of the Junkers, especially since the deed of gift to Neudeck. Oscar von Hindenburg received daily orders from the Reichs-Landbund and the Herrenklub and continually whispered them to his father. So the Junkers' meddling with the government became quite direct.

Bruening at first tolerated the abuses of the Osthilfe. He had, moreover, a still greater merit in the eyes of the Prusso-Teutonics, for it was he who, in July, 1931, introduced "control" of the mark, which separated the destiny of German currency and German economy from the rest of the world.

A Financial Wizard Enters the Game

Before 1923 the mark had passed through a period of acute inflation due to the effects of defeat. In 1924 Dr. Schacht replaced the German unit of currency, almost completely devaluated, by the "Reichsmark," based on gold. The Reichsmark circulated freely and became a choice international coin. Dr. Schacht had succeeded in making the world believe that henceforth Germany had decided to participate in international exchange and become an integral part of world commerce based on gold and free competition. The world's greatest financial institutions then offered Germany credit and her empty coffers were quickly filled. But the Prusso-Teutonics had not given up the plans of List. They figured that they could derive no advantage from the prosperity which Germany would achieve as a result of intensified international trade. The good fortune to which they aspired was of an entirely different sort. For them it was essential to become isolated from the rest of the world and avail themselves of the sufferings and prejudices excited by that isolation to get the country started on the path to conquest.

In recalling to mind the theories of List we have already briefly indicated the rôle played in their execution by Dr. Schacht. The remarkable rise of Schacht is worth considering.

Hjalmar Schacht was born in 1877. His father had returned to Germany from America only the year before Hjalmar's birth. The Schachts were a family from the frontiers of Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark, who had, after annexation

of Schleswig-Holstein by Bismarck, received German citizenship. But the Schachts had a leaning toward Denmark, and the occupation of their country by the Prussians was, for several members of the family, a reason for emigrating to America. Hjalmar's father was one of these. In the United States he acquired American citizenship and steeped himself in American democratic ideas. But reverses forced him to come back to Europe, and in 1876 he accepted a position as accountant in Germany. For this reason his son was born on German soil. He named him Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht—Hjalmar to recall his Danish origin and Horace Greeley to show his admiration for the great American journalist and for American ideals in general.

We have seen that List, creator of the economic doctrines of the Prussian school, had been an American citizen. It is a curious fact that Schacht, who was primarily responsible for putting these ideas into practice in modern times, was also of American background. This background unfortunately tended to inspire confidence in Dr. Schacht among American and English bankers, and made easy the successful and conspicuous part he was to play in Anglo-Saxon financial circles.

Schacht started his career as a financial journalist. He was next employed as financial expert in one of the largest German banks, the Dresdner Bank. During World War I he was assigned to the army to help organize the economic occupation of Belgium. After two years he was recalled to Germany, because he had been accused of having used his official authority to the advantage of his own bank in transactions involving occupation currency. In the course of his career he was frequently taunted about this "Belgian affair" by political adversaries.

After the war we find Schacht at the Darmstaedter Bank, another of the three largest German banks. Jacob Goldschmidt, head of the Darmstaedter—who was at that time in

the vanguard of the speculation brought about by the wild inflation of the mark—had recognized in Schacht a pliant and subservient henchman.

Goldschmidt was the man responsible for the rise of Schacht, for it was on his advice that the German government put Schacht in charge of the Reichsbank. His mission there was to bring to an end that astronomical inflation, after it had impoverished the entire middle class of Germany, to the enrichment of a few big speculators.

The stabilization of the mark was accomplished by October 11, 1924. Dr. Schacht received all the credit for the work, although various experts had paved the way. In any case, he did have the knack of creating in Germany and abroad the psychological atmosphere necessary for a successful stabilization. He effectively spread the belief throughout the world that the mark was now definitely on a gold basis and that Germany in the future would honorably participate in world exchange based on free trade.

No one doubted that these intentions were sincere, for they felt that Germany had everything to gain by taking such a course. Indeed, they thought that by playing the game of free competition, German industrialists and merchants, whose abilities were unquestionably first-class, would have every chance of securing a high place on the world's economic roll.

A Most Unorthodox Financial Plan

Reasoning thus, international financial experts failed to recognize one thing: that in the administration of Germany's affairs under the direction of the Prussian clique, what one might call "the German national interest" had but small influence. It was the special interest alone of a restricted group, directing the affairs of Germany from behind the scenes, which decided what course was to be taken. Or rather, what that group, because of its "robber baron" spirit *believed* to be

its interest. For that group, the job in mind had to be done in several stages. This was accomplished as follows:

1. The purpose of the first period, inflation, was to permit the looting of the entire German middle class. This was accomplished to the advantage of the Junker class which was able to make money by the tremendous rise in prices, due to scarcity of agricultural products,* and also to the advantage of bankers and big industrialists speculating directly on inflation, like Stinnes, Thyssen, and Krupp. These men succeeded, during this period, in buying up tremendous quantities of industrial properties with borrowed money which they were able to repay easily after the currency was devaluated.

2. After October 11, 1924, the next step was to encourage the inflow of foreign money under the guise of long and short term credits. Without these fresh funds there would indeed have been nothing left to pick from German pockets. The small German merchants and manufacturers had lost all their reserves during inflation. It was therefore essential, above all, to inspire confidence throughout the world regarding the mark, so that foreign credits would begin flowing in heavily. Sums amounting to from twenty to thirty billion marks were thus lent to German business in the period between 1925 and 1930.

3. During the years 1929-1930 the direction of this operation was reversed. There was more and more talk of the heavy burdens borne by Germany after payment of reparations. In reality, these payments amounted to scarcely ten billion marks. The peace treaty did not, on the country's balance sheet, represent much of a burden, because of the re-entry of gold as foreign investment worth twenty to thirty billions during the same period.

German financial and governmental circles, painting the

* When inflation reached astronomical proportions and this advantage of the Junkers became illusory, they then agreed that stabilization should take place at once.

country's situation in darker and darker colors, artificially created a panic. This produced, in German and foreign financial circles, a "flight from the mark."

From the middle of 1930 to July 1931, about two or three billion marks poured out of Germany. Finally, on July 13, 1931, under Bruening's administration, the financial authorities of Germany took advantage of the climax of the panic they themselves had provoked, to have the government declare a moratorium on internal and external debt payments, and they instituted "control of exchange" on a permanent basis.

This control of exchange again took Germany off the gold standard. Its first result was to make impossible repayment of credits which had been accorded to German economy. All short term credits became automatically long term ones, or rather, credits of "indefinite term," *i.e.*, frozen credits. The same performance which allowed the spoliation of the whole German middle class during the period before 1924 now took place at the expense of financial interests the world over.

4. The introduction of control of exchange on July 13, 1931, represented complete seizure by the State—and by groups hiding behind the State—of all export and import business. All foreign currencies accruing from export must now be yielded to the State. All importing not deemed useful to the interests of the State was forbidden. Officials whose decisions were not subject to parliamentary control ran everything, and behind them was still the same influential crowd. Import of products useful to the public at large was considerably slowed up, with preference given to entry of raw materials needed for making armaments.

Heavy industry grew increasingly prosperous. Private business suffered and prices of commodities doubled. Misery sprang up again among the middle and poorer classes of the population. The "masters of Germany" were satisfied with the execution of their plan. Misery and discontent of the peo-

ple were excellent arguments for ultimately compromising the parliamentary system which they so hated. In addition, the same arguments were invoked to excite the German people against France and England. This promoted psychological conditions favorable for the rearmament program, and prepared the way for the foreign conquest long anticipated by the Prusso-Teutonics.

5. Properly speaking, conquest—and the attempt at economic domination of world markets which it implies—may be considered the fifth phase of the same program.

Dr. Schacht Prepares the Panic

Following the stabilization of the mark, Dr. Schacht was responsible, either directly or by his action behind the scenes, for the execution of the entire financial scheme described. When, in 1924, he had brought about stabilization he was acting in full accord with the Prusso-Teutonic class and the financial circles of Germany. The tactics corresponded perfectly with what they wished.

Only the Nazis, with their customary violence, criticized the stabilization. At that time their interests were not yet identical with those of the Prusso-Teutonics. They acted as free-lances, sitting in many anterooms. They did have some connections with the Prussian clique, but had not yet placed themselves totally at their service. The aim they pursued above all else was to capitalize on the discontent of the people to raise themselves, by demagogic means, to power. Therefore they were fierce opponents of a measure such as stabilization which might eliminate one of the main causes of discontent. The advantages which Prusso-Teutonic circles hoped to gain—foreign loans destined to fill the empty cash boxes—did not interest them at all, for they had nothing to gain thereby.

On June 22, 1925, the Nazi organ *Voelkischer Kurier* attacked Dr. Schacht and called stabilization "the greatest

swindle ever committed at the public's expense." Other Nazi newspapers said that Schacht was of Jewish origin and that his real name was "Hajim Schachtl." Alfred Rosenberg took up this attack on Schacht in a work published in 1926 under the title "Novemberkoepe." These attacks did not bother Schacht much, for at that time the Nazis were not very powerful and he knew that he was under the protection of a much more influential group.

During the period after the inflation Schacht tried to inspire the world with confidence in Germany. In his frequent talks with directors of other government banks he showed himself to be a conservative, cautious financier. At that period he conformed in every detail to the classic ideal of a great banker who could personally guarantee to the world the healthy condition of Germany's financial affairs, as well as the sound basis of world-wide investments in the mark.

In 1929, when the coffers were almost filled, Schacht became bolder. Phase number two could give way to phase number three. On April 16, 1929, one of the regular conventions of national bank heads of various countries was held at the Hotel George V in Paris. As usual, the conference was to discuss the question of reparations, examining different financial aspects of the problem. Suddenly Dr. Schacht took the floor and began, to the surprise of his colleagues, introducing political factors into the discussion. He stated that Germany could not continue to make reparations payments unless she received in exchange the Polish corridor of Danzig, Upper Silesia, and "a colonization spot somewhere in the world."

Such talk surprised and shocked Dr. Schacht's colleagues utterly. What—this conservative financier who had made them believe all along that Germany was on the road to financial recovery, and who had during previous conferences argued only about financial difficulties of a technical nature—was he suddenly subordinating the financial relationship

between his country and the rest of the world to political demands?

The international bankers were quite familiar with these demands. They had been the favorite theme of a small group of German nationalists, including the Nazis. But in the past bankers had been made to believe that these groups had no influence, that the German Republic sincerely intended to respect its obligations, and that Dr. Schacht especially, as high master of German finance, cared only about stabilization of the international financial situation and the development of thriving trade. But now didn't it look as if he were borrowing the arguments of his country's extremists? *Et tu mi fili Brute?*

The disappointment of the financiers was great. Moreau, Governor of the Bank of France, demanded that the conference be immediately closed. Finally it was agreed to diminish the shock by inviting Dr. Schacht to submit a written report. Political matters were not discussed further during the sessions following, and the bankers left the conference with a semblance of agreement on financial questions. But the warning had been a fierce one and had made its impression.

Dr. Schacht now speeded up the steps to follow. Phase number three of the program was ending. In frequent interviews with his great friend, Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England, Schacht brought out more and more plainly the internal difficulties of Germany. *It was no longer a matter of inspiring confidence in the world, but of slowly and methodically preparing the way for panic which would sometime soon justify suspension of reparations payments and the freezing of foreign loans.*

Late in February, 1930, Owen Young received a cable from Schacht informing him of his intended resignation. Young felt it proper to forward this cable to the German Embassy in Washington. That was how Germany and the world at large learned the surprising news.

The roundabout way Schacht chose for revealing his intentions is astonishing. Nevertheless, it was in line with Schacht's purpose. This direct communication to the American delegate was expected to disclose the disagreement supposedly existing between Schacht and the leaders of Germany. Thus he gave the world clearly to understand that he could no longer personally guarantee the stability of Germany's financial situation—which was the best means of hastening panic. Besides, by communicating directly with the American financial expert Schacht hoped to preserve for himself the sympathies of American bankers (those of London were already insured by reason of his friendship with Montagu Norman. Furthermore, it is not known whether he simultaneously sent a similar message to Norman which the latter had not felt obliged to divulge.) The impression Schacht gave was as if he had said, "I have done my best, prepare for the worst. After me, the deluge."

On March 7, 1930, Schacht's resignation became official. The painful surgical intervention which had been planned as the end of phase three of the program—panic, moratorium and exchange control—approached. By retiring to private life in time, Schacht avoided all blame for the operation, in Germany as well as abroad. He knew that he could always come back later, washing his hands like Pontius Pilate.

All this appears clear today in the light of subsequent events. At the time, everyone found the reasons for Schacht's departure somewhat mysterious. Writing on March 9, 1930, in the *Vossische Zeitung* of Berlin, the great publicist, Georg Bernhard, said: "No one knows the real reason for this resignation." Today we know it only too well.

The departure of Schacht contributed greatly to the German capitalists' "flight from the mark." Large sums of money were invested abroad. Dr. Hans Luther, named by Bruening to replace Schacht at the head of the Reichsbank, did little to repair the damage. The die was cast and it was now simply

a matter of regulating the rhythm and speed of the program. Finally, taking advantage of a heavy run on private banks, among which the Darmstaedter Bank (the bank Schacht came from) was the first, Bruening's government, on July 13, 1931, decreed a bank moratorium and "control of exchange" which was to become permanent. Phase three of the program was finished and Germany now became financially isolated from the world.

The Plight of "Poor Germany"

The operation had so far been successful and the plan approached phase four without a hitch because nearly all the international financial interests had allowed themselves to be taken in by the touching "plight" of "poor Germany." Nevertheless, the *Financial Chronicle* of New York in its issue of July 18, 1931, revealed clearly the German government's responsibility in this course of events.

"The flight from the Mark that resulted in the present situation of Germany is due both to the demand for foreign currencies by fearstricken Germans who recalled vividly their worthless holdings of German securities and currency eight years ago, and the withdrawals of their short term credits by foreign investors. The signal for the withdrawals was given, it must be remarked, by the German government itself. Chancellor Bruening and Foreign Minister Curtius advertised rather too well, during their visit to London in June, the precarious state of affairs produced in the Reich by the worldwide economic depression and the heavy reparations burden. Pleas then made, together with the German government decree imposing heavier taxes, started a unanimous export of capital which finally exceeded the capacities of the financial institutions of the Reich."

In these events Bruening's responsibility is indisputable, but how far it went is not clear. The former Chancellor of the

Reich, now living in the United States, has not seen fit, up to the present time, to give *his* version of the story of his years in power. Possibly he was not fully conscious of the rôle he was made to play by the Prusso-Teutonic clique, who remained masters of the situation under his regime also. But the extent of Bruening's personal responsibility is only relatively important. Certain it is that in tolerating, over a period of two years, the practices which prevailed in the distribution of Osthilfe funds, and in creating the financial isolation of Germany, he did render conspicuous service to the Prusso-Teutonic class. Moreover, if it were not for this weakness, or blindness, or temporary compliance—whatever one chooses to call it—Bruening could not have kept himself in power for two years.

The Totalitarian Plan

Between the two world wars, Germany was thus the first country to destroy, on a large scale, the effect of the stabilization of her currency, and to break away from international free trade based on gold. It was she, therefore, who supplied the "evil inspiration," and within a few months several countries followed suit. The avalanche was let loose. Finally many countries adopted a kind of "control of exchange" which became, during the period before the war, the primary obstacle to international commerce.*

The control of exchange introduced by Germany was extremely strict. A veritable financial "wall of China" was built around the country. Without this seclusion, whose rules were established and perfected under a regime still bearing the title "Republic," Hitler's totalitarian scheme could not have functioned. The new measures were part of the Prusso-

* The state of war added other obstacles such as transportation difficulties and prohibitions on exporting. In addition, during the war the few countries which were still allowing free export of currency finally adopted, almost without exception, a system of more or less strict control of exchange.

Teutonics' plan, and they had definitely decided that, from that time on, the country was headed in a totalitarian direction.

At that moment it was probably not yet clear in the minds of the real masters of Germany *who* should be entrusted with the task of putting this totalitarian orientation into practice. Although Hitler was already a serious candidate for the enviable post of "sublime henchman," and was the protégé of several persons of influence, the forces running Germany from behind the scenes still, in principle, had free choice. One may well imagine that they might have put someone else in charge of the execution of an absolutely identical plan, provided that they could have found one as well qualified as Hitler to dispatch the business. It was Hitler's good fortune that at the time no other man existed in Germany who had his peculiar qualifications to put into execution the Machiavelian plan of the Prusso-Teutonics. Von Papen, who was the only other serious candidate, was simply an amateur in comparison. He did not have the qualities required of a "good professional."

The "Robber Baron" Concept

After the advent of Nazism only the method of a "financial wall of China" could permit German economy to be placed practically on a war basis and to work for total national rearmament. (Secret rearmament in accordance with a definite plan had never ceased since the Armistice.) It was this financial arrangement which paved the way for Hitler's demagogic argument* that *other nations were refusing Germany the raw materials she needed, and therefore she must conquer to get them*. It was this argument that made it possible for Hitler to get his people to accept the harsh policy,

* If the Prusso-Teutonics had chosen another "henchman" he would have used the same argument.

“cannon instead of butter,” and the sufferings of war. By virtue of the same argument he got people in certain foreign circles almost to excuse his policies because they bewailed the fate of “starving Germany.”

We have already touched on this question, but one cannot insist too strongly on the fallacy of this line of reasoning. As long as she remained on the basis of a free financial system Germany could always have procured all the raw materials she needed. They were at her disposal in free markets throughout the world, and could be bought in a few seconds at any time by means of a simple cabled order. Countries much smaller—Belgium, for example, which was as industrialized as Germany—were also in the same position and never complained of a “dearth of raw materials” or of “lack of vital space.” This dearth, this lack of vital space, was deliberately produced by a series of measures, the first of which was the introduction of control of exchange on July 13, 1931. Those who defend the German point of view try to prove that the financial panic provoked by the introduction of control of exchange was not brought about deliberately by the group ruling the affairs of Germany, and that consequently control of exchange was inevitable. The reverse is easy to prove, but even if we admit for a moment the correctness of this thesis, we must say that the solution by control of exchange as a *permanent* measure was the worst that could have been chosen. One may compare Germany in panic to a bank on which there is a run. Obviously, the doors must be closed for a time, but permanent closing, or opening subject to all sorts of restrictive and annoying rules imposed on patrons, would be the best way one could imagine to avoid entirely restoring normal life to the bank. One need not wonder why a bank choosing such methods goes to its ruin. The only solution by which one might hope to save a bank in straits would be to put persons in charge who inspire confidence, and start to function again by opening the cashiers’ windows wide.

Germany’s seclusion from the normal economic world exchange was also in perfect harmony with what one would expect from “robber barons.” Henceforth it was a matter of gaining possession of raw materials by force and *consequently of the territories which produced them*, even if it was possible to buy and pay for these materials with the product of one’s labor, provided, of course, that one was inclined to supply such labor. Most people—and most nations—feel that this procedure is simpler, healthier and more satisfactory. The robber barons, and the powers governing Germany, felt (and still feel) exactly the opposite way.

People committing acts considered dishonest under the law always try to excuse these acts by saying that they have been obliged to act so because the society in which we live does not allow them to live otherwise. Just the same attitude was adopted by Germany from 1931 on; Hitler merely accentuated it by developing the theme of “vital space.” But the plans providing for this attitude were established long before 1931 by the powers behind the German scene.

Dr. Schacht Chooses Hitler

In 1930, at the time of Schacht’s resignation, the Prusso-Teutonic powers did not yet seem to have chosen Hitler as final executor of their schemes. The agitation which he had created in Germany had a certain utility for these aims; therefore they helped him when occasion offered but had not yet decided to entrust him with the “supreme task.”

If the combined Prusso-Teutonic powers had not yet made their choice, Schacht had made his. From 1930 on he was staking everything on Hitler.

Known to the public as a man of democratic convictions, Schacht had in reality always been in close touch with the Prusso-Teutonics and in particular with the “heavy industry” wing of that group. He was no fool; he knew who wielded

the real power in Germany. All his activity as head of the Reichsbank, the stabilization of the mark and his fruitful efforts to attract foreign capital, had been undertaken in perfect agreement with the Prusso-Teutonics.

We have seen that at that time the Nazis were not in agreement with him, for they knew that stabilization and influx of foreign capital would bring order and prosperity back to the country. And nothing could have a less favorable effect on the success of their demagogic agitation than order and prosperity. No wonder, then, that they attacked Schacht's stabilization measures. Not yet admitted to the "inner councils," Hitler and his friends did not know that stabilization and the prosperity it was designed to bring about were to be of short duration, according to the intentions of the very ones who had decided on the introduction of these measures.

Toward the end of his regime at the head of the Reichsbank Dr. Schacht contributed greatly to preparations for the panic which was to reach its climax in July, 1931, a year and four months after his return to private life. Attracting foreign capital no longer concerned the Prusso-Teutonics. Now they were occupied with achieving successively financial and economic autarchy in Germany and ultimately keeping the foreign capital which had been invested there. This pleased the Nazis better, since panic and privation resulting from autarchy would furnish a fertile field for their agitation. The points of contact therefore between Hitler and Schacht were quite obvious. Meetings between Schacht and Nazi leaders took place and after his departure from the Reichsbank Schacht saw Hitler personally. No Nazi again accused Schacht of being named Hajim Schachtl. During March, 1930, the National Socialist deputy Feder was the only one to defend Schacht in the Reichstag while deputies of other parties attacked him for his "unmotivated" resignation which was bound to have a harmful effect upon Germany's financial prestige.

Immediately after his retirement from office in 1930 Schacht procured subsidies for Hitler from his friends in heavy industry. About that time Schacht introduced Dr. Walter Funk to Hitler. Funk was to become head of economic affairs in Germany under the Hitler regime. Schacht had known Funk when the latter was a young economic journalist working chiefly for publications financed by industrialists of the Ruhr. His presence close to Hitler represented a further guarantee to the industrialists that their plans would be faithfully executed by Hitler. Schacht and Funk had long conversations with Hitler on matters concerning the economic future of Germany, and explained List's ideas to him. In this way Hitler's economic training was shaped in a direction coinciding in every particular with Prusso-Teutonic conceptions and traditions. He understood the full meaning of List's economic thesis, which recommended rigid economic isolation from the rest of the world in order to have to conquer it by force. All the speeches made by Funk from the time he began to represent Germany in the economic sphere were obviously inspired by this thesis.

In the fall of 1930 Schacht set out on a journey which took him through several countries: Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and America. He went "as a private citizen" to visit his friends in banking circles. He was well received everywhere, for the halo of the stabilization still surrounded him. People did not realize that he was actually just as responsible for the recent deterioration of German finances which he had promoted from the wings. Schacht was still looked upon as a man of the Weimar Republic, a sincere democrat. Foreign bankers therefore wondered why during his trip he openly defended the Nazis and predicted a great future for them, using the *Leitmotiv*: "They are not as dangerous to big business as people say." On his return to Germany the National Socialist deputy von Reventlow made a speech in the Reichstag thanking the former President of the Reichsbank for having

so well explained the Nazi point of view in the United States.

In spite of the position taken openly by Schacht in favor of National Socialism, people were astonished when on March 17, 1933, he returned as head of the Reichsbank. Hitler had taken office only six weeks previously, on January 30. The Fuehrer had decided to allow free rein in financial matters to the man who had considerably aided his accession to power by winning confidence toward him of a section of the Prusso-Teutonic group as well as of German and foreign banking circles.

Bruening's Blunder

Bruening was much less "in the know" than either Schacht or Hitler. In spite of services he had consciously or unconsciously rendered the Prusso-Teutonics, Bruening was sacrificed by them in 1932. Indeed the Chancellor, though he had been obedient in the beginning to pressures to which he had been exposed, was naïve enough toward the end of his term in office not to recognize the precise extent of influence exerted by the Prusso-Teutonics over the affairs of Germany. The misery of the peasant class had been aggravated as a consequence of the very measures which were enriching the Junkers. Bruening committed the tactical error of heeding his humanitarian feelings, a dangerous luxury for a German statesman. He had been moved by the peasants' misery, and to bring about a remedy had envisaged a plan of settling small farmers on land taken from poorly exploited large estates. This land would have to be condemned at prices to be determined.

This *Siedlungsplan*, although quite modest in extent, alarmed the Junkers exceedingly. They began to conduct a campaign against Bruening, speaking of his "agrarian Bol-

shevism." Bruening aggravated his mistake in the eyes of the Prusso-Teutonics by retorting with a dangerous argument. To justify his plan he hinted that he would let the Osthilfe abuses be brought up again and he threatened to prosecute the people responsible for them. He ingenuously imagined that it would suffice to pronounce this threat in order to win the argument. Actually the argument was dynamite and caused an explosion. The stable Bruening regime which had lasted more than two years disappeared in a trice.

Representatives of the Landbund and the Herrenklub had worked on Colonel von Hindenburg and he interceded with his father, only a few weeks after the Marshal-President's re-election in which Bruening had helped considerably. The Marshal felt a certain gratitude toward his Chancellor and was embarrassed to have to sacrifice him. But what could he do when Bruening had committed the blunder of definitely displeasing those Landbund gentlemen? And then had not Oscar remarked that if too much were said about the Osthilfe business, people would end up by wondering similarly about the circumstances under which the deed of gift to Neudeck had been made?

Hindenburg called Bruening into his office and the interview ended with the latter's resignation. The Chancellor had been able to govern only with the aid of the famous "decrees of dissolution" of the Reichstag, signed in advance by the President. Since the Marshal no longer accorded him his confidence and refused to sign the necessary decrees from that time on, Bruening had to leave.

Three men chiefly had contributed to Bruening's fall, three ambitious men who depended upon different sources of strength: von Papen, General Schleicher, and Hitler. They had thus succeeded in eliminating one rival who had been in their way. The problem now was for each to eliminate the other two.

The Man of the Junkers

Franz von Papen was the man of the Junkers, or at least, recognized their strength, intended to serve them faithfully, and derive thereby well deserved advantages. He was not a Junker himself, in the strict sense of the word, for he did not come from the eastern provinces. He was descended from a noble Westphalian family. His ancestors had participated in the terrible practices of the Fehme of Westphalia but were not part of the circle around the Teutonic Knights. Von Papen, a member of the Herrenklub, had nevertheless been accepted by the Junkers as one of them, and he conducted himself as a faithful executor of the Landbund's designs.

Attaché of the German Embassy at Washington until 1916, von Papen had been responsible for numerous acts of sabotage carried out to obstruct American manufacture of armaments. He later joined detachments of the German army in Turkey and after the war became active in politics. A devout Catholic, he was at first a member of the Centrum party, the Catholic party *par excellence*. Then, having realized that the real power was in the hands of the Junker class, he swerved further and further away from the Centrum, whose platform opposed the Junkers', and applied himself exclusively to the promotion of Prussian policies.

By reason of his Westphalian origin von Papen had close connections with the big industrialists of the Ruhr. He exerted himself therefore to strengthen the bonds long existing between Junkers and heavy industry. Not ignoring the influence which the Nazi movement appeared to be gaining in the wake of the Junker movement, he procured subsidies several times for Hitler from the industrialists. In these efforts he was later matched by Schacht. Each time, of course, he acted with the full approval of his masters, the Junkers. Finally recognizing the prestige surrounding Marshal von Hindenburg and taking account of the fact that as long as he was President of

the Republic he would wield great authority, von Papen attached himself particularly to his person and acquired considerable influence over him.

Von Papen's intrigues contributed greatly to Bruening's fall. Member of the Centrum party like Bruening, he should normally have formed a common front with him. Actually he set a trap for him. After getting him to talk privately about his plans for dividing land into lots, he hurried to report these conversations to the Herrenklub and to Hindenburg. He gave them to understand that Bruening was promoting a policy contrary to Junker interests and that it was necessary to get rid of him.

The Man of the Reichswehr

General Kurt von Schleicher was above all else a soldier and in his political attitude depended chiefly on the Reichswehr. He was also considered the more or less official delegate of the army in the political world. This was the rôle he intended faithfully to perform. He hid in the shadow of the different governments which succeeded each other—the ever alert watch-dog over the interests of that powerful organization, the Reichswehr. His mistake was to believe that the Reichswehr was a power in itself which could get along without every other power, including the Junker class.

In spite of his Prussian origin Schleicher didn't like the idea that the Reichswehr had to receive orders from the Landbund, but at the outset he did not show his displeasure. To strengthen his position he sought allies outside the Reichswehr. He believed he had found them in the persons of Gregor Strasser and Captain Roehm, two men who represented, within the Nazi party, tendencies opposed to the Junkers.

Schleicher figured that Roehm, who was at the head of the 600,000 men comprising the SA, and Gregor Strasser, who

came immediately after Hitler in the Nazi hierarchy, would be the real future masters of the Nazi movement.

Gregor Strasser was the sincere fanatic of the movement, a direct antithesis of the Machiavellian Hitler. Strasser still believed in the program represented by the name "National Socialist" and took a very censorious attitude toward the Prusso-Teutonics' hold on Germany's affairs. Gregor Strasser was, moreover, strongly influenced by his brother Otto on this subject. The latter, though clearly the more intelligent and discerning of the two brothers, did not have the prestige of Gregor because he was younger. Cognizant of Hitler's lack of sincerity and of his servile submission to the Prusso-Teutonic powers, Otto Strasser left the Nazi party in July, 1930. Gregor stayed because he imagined that with the great influence he wielded over the militant members of the party he would succeed in making his ideas triumph.

Through Gregor Strasser, Schleicher hoped to secure the help of the Nazis and their parliamentary representatives who were very strong in the Reichstag. Roehm did not have the sincerity of Strasser. He was a simple adventurer, but, South German like Strasser, he disliked the strong influence of Prussian lords on German affairs.

His cohorts of the SA struck terror everywhere. They were composed of hoodlums of every sort, including some elements from the Consul and Rossbach organizations. These had not been able to find other employment after dissolution of those organizations, and finding themselves abandoned by their former bosses, ended up by joining the first free gang willing to feed them.

In spite of the presence of these elements on its roll, the SA, under Roehm's leadership, did not incline toward the Junkers. Roehm figured that the Nazi party would soon be the sole force of importance in Germany. Since he was at its core with his 600,000 SA men he would wield the real power.

Schleicher expected to use to advantage his identity of

feeling with Strasser and Roehm on the subject of the Junkers. Certainly the Reichswehr was, *to his mind*, the really supreme power in Germany. But if he were to oppose the Junkers, the Nazis, especially if they were of the complexion of Gregor Strasser and Roehm, would be welcome allies. Consequently as a service to his newly acquired friends he violently opposed General Groener, War Minister in Bruening's cabinet, when Groener decided to dissolve the semi-military organizations of the Nazis, including Roehm's SA.

Groener usually acted as a man of politics rather than as a general. As for Schleicher, he knew that he could count on the full support of the Reichswehr even if there were conflict between himself and Groener. Moreover, the latter, who was not of noble birth, had always been considered by the other generals as an upstart plebeian. Schleicher now showed the generals clearly that the Nazis could be of great use to them and that the SA would end up by augmenting the Reichswehr troops. Their dissolution must be avoided at all costs. Schleicher and the Reichswehr were therefore in agreement with von Papen and the Junkers in the matter of getting rid of Bruening and Groener. This facilitated the abrupt dismissal of the Chancellor by Hindenburg, for the Marshal heeded the counsel of the Reichswehr.

Von Papen and Hitler rubbed their hands. Thanks to the aid they had received from Schleicher, they had got rid of one of their rivals for power.

Hitler Chooses His Masters

Of the three people left in the poker game after Bruening was "cleaned out," Hitler was by far the best tactician and at the same time the most hypocritical and Machiavellian. Ever since the beginning of his career he had had but one goal: personal power. To achieve it he was always ready to make any concession or any compromise. He also knew exactly for

whom to reserve these concessions and compromises, for he judged accurately the importance of powers opposing each other and figured that he should always ally himself with the strongest.

Hitler knew that the democratic parties in Germany were completely paralyzed, at first as a consequence of acts of the *Fehme*, and later because of the rise of his own party which had been effected with all the cunning of demagogism and terror.

There remained the Prusso-Teutonic group which controlled Germany's affairs to a greater and greater extent. Hitler realized that he must reckon with several divergent forces within this group.

The Junker organizations, with their "professional" offshoot, the *Landbund*, and their "social" outgrowth, the *Herrenklub* appeared to be the most powerful. The bulk of the Junker class were interested only in maintaining their feudal privileges, but the secret Junker organizations, descended from the Society of Lizards, seemed to have kept alive the most fantastic, most ambitious Prussian expansion schemes.

The big industrialists of Westphalia ran second. They had by this time definitely chosen their path of industrial expansion: the rearmament of Germany. Hugenberg, who controlled a powerful press and the "Deutschnazional" party in the Reichstag, was their agent. The industrialists felt inferior to the Junkers in the matter of secret organization. Their infiltration into the machinery of the State was not as complete as that of the Prussian lords. Nevertheless, they were superior in financial means.

The third component of the Prusso-Teutonic group was the Reichswehr. Sprung from the same roots as the Junkers, joined to them by a thousand ties, and generously serving their interests, the Reichswehr still had an existence of its own, determined by its own professional ambition. Groener was an example of a general who had almost completely escaped the

grasp of the external powers which controlled the Reichswehr. Schleicher, mouthpiece of the Reichswehr until 1933, at first had a meek attitude toward the Junkers, but later tried to save the army from their influence.

These tendencies show that the army officers, proud of their professional knowledge, had at times an exaggerated opinion of the influence which their armed forces gave them in the internal political scheme, and did not always look favorably upon the rôle which the other elements of the Prusso-Teutonic group made them play. In spite of this fancied independence, the Reichswehr on the whole was still an organic component of, and faithfully submissive to, the Prusso-Teutonic group.

The officials sprung from the old Prussian school, descendants direct or spiritual of "officials of the Order," did not form so coherent an entity as the Reichswehr, for example. They could be found scattered here and there throughout the machinery of administration. They could not be distinguished, on the surface, from officials of another type of a more modern and more democratic background. By now they could also be met—and this had been true for some time—well beyond Prussian frontiers, in other parts of Germany. Prussian centralization had functioned well in Germany since Bismarck's times: Prussian officials were sent all around the country and local officials were brought closer and closer to the Prusso-Teutonic type of thinking through the influence of the numerous patriotic and professional organizations under Prussian control. Not necessarily allied and related to the Junkers and officers, but sometimes merely coming from schools steeped in the old Prussian spirit, they were faithful servants, in most cases reaping the personal reward for their devotion. If they committed abuses, or closed their eyes to the abuses of others, this was always because of their devotion to what they thought—sometimes correctly, but often mistakenly—a higher German cause. Highly disciplined them-

selves, and disciplining others—therefore very intolerant—, highly conscious of what they called a “Prussian sense of duty,” they may well be considered chiefly the victims of their traditions. They were victims as well of the dark intentions of the rest of the Prusso-Teutonic group.

Characters of every background and description gravitated about the Prusso-Teutonic group, serving its interests and gaining advantages in exchange. Writers, university professors, bankers, etc., in large numbers, had realized that they could count on the success of Prusso-Teutonic plans and became their ardent propagandists.

But all these folk were not an organized entity. Hitler, who sought only personal power, was therefore not in the least obliged to reckon with them as factors in the internal political scheme. Furthermore, for the same reasons he could also neglect the functionaries, in spite of their numerical importance. Hitler, who was a good judge during his entire career of the political importance of people and groups he encountered, knew that all these elements would follow him without hesitation, from the moment he succeeded in coming to terms with the three great contemporary branches of the Prusso-Teutonic group: Junkers, industrialists, and Reichswehr.

The Men Who Mattered

In order to achieve such an arrangement, Hitler figured that he needed either to come to an agreement with the men in whom these three blocs placed their confidence, or else eliminate these men. The men who mattered were Schacht, Hugenberg, von Papen, and Schleicher.

Schacht had influence over heavy industry and the banking circles which were behind this industry. Hitler knew, after his talks with Schacht in 1930, that he could thenceforth count on him unreservedly. Furthermore he himself had given Schacht and his friends absolute pledges regarding the execu-

tion of the financial and economic plan in which they were interested. Schacht had secured Hitler's promise that after he seized power Schacht would be allowed to return to the direction of the Reichsbank and would be able there to finish the job of financially isolating Germany from the rest of the world. Behind the wall of isolation, rearmament could be ceaselessly pushed and heavy industry would be generously supplied with orders.

On Schacht's suggestion, Hitler was also willing to accept the service of that other faithful servant of the aims of heavy industry: Dr. Walter Funk. Schacht and Funk were to have, from then on, *carte blanche* in everything concerning the economic action of Nazism. (Goering later tried to eliminate Schacht, whom he considered a competitor in the economic field. Although Goering himself had succeeded in establishing strong ties with the Prusso-Teutonic group, he could not get rid of Schacht completely because the latter right down to the present has been supported by big industry.)

Hugenberg was the political and journalistic henchman of the industrialists. Hitler figured that he would be easy to satisfy. A post in the cabinet when Hitler succeeded to power, advantages granted his newspapers, would be sufficient to keep him quiet so that he could later be relegated to the background.

Von Papen had as strong an influence over the Junkers as he had over the industrialists, and over the old Marshal as well. He had often played the rôle of liaison officer between all three and this had given him additional influence.

Schleicher in his turn had the full confidence of the Reichswehr.

Von Papen and Schleicher were therefore, in the eyes of Hitler, the two men with whom he must first reckon if he wished to prepare for his advent to power. He used his formula in connection with them first of all: *either come to an agreement with them, or eliminate them.*

To come to an agreement with both at once seemed to him impossible. The possible grounds for understanding were different in each case.

Von Papen, with whom Hitler maintained a close personal relationship, seemed entirely devoted to the feudal interests of the Junkers. On the other hand, Schleicher became more and more critical of these feudal tendencies and maintained relations with the anti-Junker wing of Hitler's own party: Strasser and Roehm. Hitler was kept informed of talks between his lieutenants and Schleicher, and Gregor Strasser tried to persuade him to ally himself definitely with Schleicher. He had to make his choice.

Weighing the power and influence of each, Hitler arrived at the conclusion that the Junkers were the most important force within the Prusso-Teutonic group. Next came heavy industry. These two forces, furthermore, got along quite well, and von Papen was the man of both. He must therefore treat him with respect.

Schleicher was the man of the Reichswehr, and the Reichswehr itself only executed the commands of the two other groups; therefore it was a less important force. Hitler's choice was made: he chose, as usual, the stronger. He could get rid of Schleicher without risk if he were supported by von Papen and the powers behind him. The operation he had in mind was not so simple as it sounded. It was a matter of discarding Schleicher and molding von Papen to his wishes. To succeed in this he knew of an infallible method: to set the two men against each other and make them do the job he had in mind. After the fall of Bruening von Papen was a logical candidate for the office of Chancellor. If Hitler could succeed in getting von Papen overthrown through the good offices of Schleicher, and Schleicher later overthrown through the aid of von Papen, the trick would be turned and Hitler himself could succeed to power.

By instigating this double action without bringing him-

self into the picture, Hitler foresaw the advantage of having both men find themselves in direct opposition to each other without getting himself involved. This was the classical system so frequently applied in Prussian history when competing nations were divided by getting each to believe the Prussians were on their side. Thus Bismarck succeeded in dividing and isolating Denmark from Austria on the one hand, and Austria from France on the other. The same Prussian system was to be used later by Hitler in the international game when he tried to make the nations allied against him believe—one after the other—that he intended to ally himself with that nation against the others.

Hitler used this system successfully in 1939 when he managed to separate Russia from England; and in 1940 when he made the France of Pétain believe that Nazi Germany could be a more valuable ally for France than England. And it was this same system that Hitler tried to apply in 1941, this time without success, when he attempted to persuade England and Russia alternately to conclude a separate peace with him so that he could later turn against the other. The game was becoming too transparent for him to succeed *every* time. But it's true also that the time-honored systems of "confidence men," though often exposed, nevertheless continue to claim new victims.

A further parallel may be drawn between Hitler's actions in inner German politics and the methods he employs in dealing with foreign nations. To weaken his enemy, internal or external, his preferred method is to use the enemy's "minorities"—whom he wins over to his side—to his own advantage; at the same time his *own* minorities also serve his purposes.

Notwithstanding the traditional fidelity of the Reichswehr toward the Junkers, he knew how to set General Schleicher against the Junkers without putting himself in evidence. He thus succeeded in causing a division among his victims, using the "minority" in the opposing camp, while his own "minority"

ties," Gregor Strasser and Roehm, were, due to their influence on Schleicher, unconscious tools of this transaction. Likewise, Hitler managed to put to good use foreign connections of a man such as Abetz, known earlier for his pacifist activities. Abetz was to bring him several French "leftist collaborationists," Jean Luchaire for example, who had formerly worked hard in behalf of the League of Nations. Hitler knows how to transform former opponents of his ideas into useful tools.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST ACT OF THE TRAGICOMEDY

ON MAY 30, 1932, Bruening resigned. Von Papen followed as Chancellor and was succeeded on December 2, 1932, by General von Schleicher. Von Papen's and Schleicher's governments were the last two before Hitler's advent to power on January 30, 1933. The main trends underlying these events were the following:

(a) When von Papen succeeded to power he expected to have Hitler's support. It was with this in mind that he had procured subsidies from the industrialists for Hitler. The latter's support would be very useful to him, for although he governed with the aid of Presidential "decrees of dissolution," no Chancellor could afford to dismiss the Reichstag too often. The Nazis were the most important party in the Reichstag. Although they did not have a majority at their disposal, their support was nevertheless of great value to a government head. Besides, Hitler was an excellent "bogyman" who could serve to hold in check the parties of Germany's left, and intimidate countries abroad. The latter, under the effects of this intimidation, would be much more apt to make concessions to Germany in the direction desired by the Prusso-Teutonic. Von Papen figured that the bargain he had concluded with the Fuehrer was fair and satisfactory to both. He therefore expected it to last, the more so because Hitler could not hope to accede to power himself. Indeed the Marshal had pronounced an absolute veto of this possibility and the Reichswehr did not look upon it favorably either.

(b) Von Papen knew that he could count on the support

of the real masters of Germany, the ruling Junker clique and heavy industry. He served them well and had no doubts about his reward. Also, he had been on an equal footing with Schleicher in the overthrow of Bruening, and the general accepted a place in his cabinet as Minister of the Reichswehr. The Reichswehr would therefore be behind him too. Possessing, in addition, Hindenburg's friendship and counting on Hitler's integrity, von Papen imagined that he would remain at the head of the government for many years.

(c) Von Papen, believing his regime to be a lasting one, let it be understood that he had plans reaching far into the future. To consolidate his position positively he projected a *reform of the Weimar Constitution, a reform which would have procured him quasi-dictatorial powers and would have put an end to the parliamentary system, condemned to death by the Prusso-Teutonics. Then, in the field of foreign policy, von Papen recommended ideas in the direction of a "European Federation" under German control, and spoke of a rebirth of the Holy Roman Empire.* He had not, of course, taken any of his ideas from Hitler but rather from purely Prusso-Teutonic sources. Nevertheless one may say that if he had been able to maintain himself in power he would have tried to carry out, internally as well as abroad, schemes almost identical to those which Hitler was to produce later.

The result would have been practically the same and probably Prussian Germany under von Papen's control would have taken a direction about identical with the one she took under Hitler. True, von Papen would have carried out some of his plans at a different tempo, not possessing Hitler's brutally determined spirit. But what he lacked in brutality he compensated for in subtlety and his regime would doubtless have deceived foreign countries much longer. Hitler's one merit is that of having brought the danger into the foreground, into the public eye. The characteristic brutality

of his expression and action has resulted in making the world aware of the threat for which actually the Prusso-Teutonic forces are responsible—more aware than if a more commonplace individual, von Papen, for example, had pursued the same course.

The reason why von Papen was not the one finally to put these plans into practice for the Prusso-Teutonics was that Hitler did not intend him to be. Hitler was incontestably the stronger of the two. He was not going to allow von Papen to get the credit for the performance, nor to content himself with the rôle of "bogyman." He might consider this rôle but only if he could play it as a star. He had realized that von Papen expected to maintain himself in power as compensation for his faithful service to the Prusso-Teutonics. He therefore decided that he would not let him have that privilege: that he himself would occupy that post and serve the same interests with even greater devotion, allowing von Papen at most a position in the background.

Blackmail and Intrigue

The following sequence of events developed from the interplay of the motives discussed above:

1.—Von Papen organized his cabinet with Schleicher as Minister of War and representatives of the Junkers as holders of the greater number of portfolios. Von Papen dismissed the Reichstag and prepared, in agreement with Hitler, new elections in which the Nazis expected to increase their number of seats. The von Papen-Hitler alliance seemed firmly cemented.

2.—On July 20, 1932, von Papen forcibly removed from office the Socialist government of Prussia. As a reaction against the feudal powers secretly controlling public affairs, the people of Prussia had placed Socialist governments in power in the state of Prussia after the Great War. Since

Prussia represented about two-thirds of the area and population of Germany, its Socialist governments were a nuisance to the feudal powers who intended to keep effective domination over Germany's affairs. By putting an end, with his *coup d'Etat*, to the contradictory situation existing in Prussia, von Papen rendered another important service to his friends. The Prime Minister of Prussia, Otto Braun, and Severing, Minister of Interior (both of whom were Socialists), were frightened by the terroristic acts of the Prusso-Teutonic and did not dare to resist, although they had a considerable police force at their disposal. The legal excuse given by von Papen for his *coup d'Etat* was clearly on uncertain ground and was later invalidated by the Supreme Court of Leipzig. No matter; control of Prussian affairs was to remain in the future directly with the Reich.

3.—Von Papen managed to satisfy his "bosses" on all matters. Decrees authorized wage reductions. Osthilfe subsidies were granted wholesale to the Junkers. Satisfaction was given the Nazis as well: the measure calling for dispersal of the SA and SS, issued under Bruening, was suspended.

4.—New elections were held on July 31. The Nazis now obtained 230 seats in the Reichstag out of a total of 608. Hitler did not yet have a majority but he had nevertheless won the day. His future now looked most promising.

5.—On August 13, at von Papen's suggestion, Hitler went to see President von Hindenburg. The Chancellor thought that Hindenburg's authority would be sufficient to persuade Hitler to accept a post within the cabinet. Von Papen hoped that as part of the government, Hitler would continue his support. Hitler told Hindenburg frankly that he did not want a subordinate place in the cabinet. He wanted to be Chancellor or nothing. Hindenburg went into a rage but it did no good. Hitler gave him to understand plainly that from that day on he would be on the opposing side. The Hitler-von Papen alliance was terminated for the time being. It had defi-

nately served Hitler's purpose because he had obtained the new elections he wanted and had come out of these stronger than before. He had also avoided the dissolution of his "self-defense troops" which the previous regime had considered. Having secured what he wanted Hitler could now go into opposition to the government. From then on the government was again in danger.

6.—Hitler carried out his threat on September 12. The government met with a reverse in the Reichstag, Nazis and Communists voting against it. The result: 513 against, 32 for. Nevertheless von Papen did not resign; he dissolved Parliament. Elections were set for November 6. In the meantime von Papen arranged to have the industrialists cut off Hitler's subsidies. The Nazis would therefore find themselves in financial straits during the electoral campaign and the election returns would reflect this. Only twelve millions voted for the Nazis instead of the fourteen million at the last election, and as a result the National-Socialist party lost thirty-five seats.

7.—Von Papen, by forcing Hitler into elections without the financial aid he used to procure for him, hoped to put him into a position of inferiority. He expected that a new agreement with Hitler would thus be easier to achieve. The Nazi party was indeed passing through a severe moral and financial crisis. For the first time the most faithful members of the party began to doubt Hitler. Creditors became threatening. But the Nazis, in spite of their losses, were still the most important party in the Reichstag.

Von Papen thought he had brought Hitler into line and again offered him a post in the cabinet, even proposing to him the office of Vice-Chancellor. Hitler refused. He was still playing "all or nothing."

8.—The expedient of dissolving the Reichstag could not be repeated *ad infinitum*. Von Papen therefore put into execution an idea which he considered a stroke of genius. On November 17, 1932, he offered the President his resignation. He

knew that he would be asked to form a new cabinet. He would take advantage of the crisis to prove that it was quite impossible to constitute a government which would have a majority in the Reichstag. Under such conditions it could be shown that if any government were to be stable and effective the constitution would have to be changed. Von Papen as Chancellor would receive under the new constitution quasi-dictatorial powers.

9.—A strong government might perhaps have been able to effect such a change in the constitution, equivalent, without the approval of the Reichstag, to a *coup d'Etat*. In order to establish a government of this nature it would have been essential for von Papen to be able to count on full aid of the Reichswehr. However, at the last moment this aid entirely failed him. Schleicher actually declared that he did not wish to be in the new cabinet. At first von Papen thought it was a trick. He continued to bargain with the General, who remained adamant, his position taken. Under such conditions there remained no choice for von Papen but to announce, on November 30, that he was unable to organize a new cabinet.

10.—By leaving office von Papen thought he was taking a step which would add to his prestige; he expected to return some day. He retained Hindenburg's confidence, as well as that of the Junker-heavy industry group. He did not feel too strongly against Hitler for not supporting him, for the Nazi leader had for a long time given him plainly to understand that he was not disposed to cooperate except on condition that top place be reserved for him. As for Schleicher, who had stabbed him in the back, von Papen wished to wreak vengeance upon him at the first opportunity.

11.—What had inspired Schleicher's attitude? Negotiations with Gregor Strasser, Hitler's second-in-command as head of the Nazi party, had been the cause. For a long time Strasser had been dissatisfied with Hitler's close connections with the Junkers and heavy industry. He knew that these con-

nections had of late been passing through von Papen. As we have seen, Strasser still held to the old "Socialist" conception of his party and would have liked to free it of its servitude to the Prusso-Teutonics, toward whom he had always been critical. With this aim, he inclined in the direction of an alliance with Schleicher who willingly let himself be designated as the "Socialist General."

Such was the integrity of Strasser that he kept Hitler informed of his negotiations with Schleicher. Hitler encouraged them, for he saw in them a good way to separate Schleicher from von Papen. Urged forward by Strasser, and indirectly by Hitler, Schleicher had formulated a plan to organize the cabinet himself, succeeding von Papen, whom he dropped from then on, and taking Strasser with him as Vice-Chancellor. Hitler pretended to be willing to accept this combination, but stated his conditions.

12.—While waiting for the matter of Gregor Strasser's entry into his cabinet to be settled, Schleicher organized his government on December 2, hoping Strasser would join him in a few days. One of Hitler's conditions had been that Strasser ascertain, before accepting the post of Vice-Chancellor, that Hindenburg's veto regarding himself was still valid. Schleicher took Strasser to the Marshal, who gave him his word of honor that "the Austrian corporal would never be Reichs-Chancellor." Strasser considered the matter definitely verified. He informed Hitler of his interview and awaited Hitler's permission to accept the post of Vice-Chancellor.

Hitler was to arrive in Berlin on December 8 to discuss the question. Strasser waited in vain at the station. Hitler was not on the train. Later in the day Hitler rushed to Strasser's house and violently reproached him, accusing him of having lied. Hitler said that he had just seen von Papen, who had assured him that Hindenburg's word had not been final.

Since then Otto Strasser has recounted his brother's interpretation of this scene. Gregor, very devoted to Hitler, could

never see the full extent of his Machiavellism and attributed Hitler's reproaches to the intrigues of Goering and Goebbels. Indeed Goering and Goebbels had for some time been very jealous of the position occupied by Strasser in the party. Strasser, still confident of Hitler's good faith, felt that only under the influence of Goering and Goebbels could Hitler have believed that his most faithful lieutenant had lied to him.

Actually it is plain that Hitler, in spite of Strasser's interpretation, had been putting on an act during all these discussions. He had never had any intention of allowing Strasser to accept the office of Vice-Chancellor, for he knew that this would give Strasser practically first place in the party, which would not have suited him at all. Moreover, by entering the cabinet Strasser would considerably fortify Schleicher's position, and this again would not be to Hitler's advantage. Hitler had nevertheless pretended to approve of Strasser's negotiations, only for the purpose of eventually separating Schleicher and von Papen. Once Schleicher's cabinet had been formed and this separation accomplished, he could afford to reverse his position. The scene he had played before Strasser when he spoke of lies and betrayal, and quoted the testimony of von Papen, Goering, and Goebbels, was merely one of those sensational, dramatic stunts which Hitler always uses to good advantage when he wants to extricate himself from a difficult situation. Strasser let himself be deluded (like so many before and after him) into believing in the sincerity of the actor he was watching.

13.—Gregor Strasser was too weary to continue the struggle. Grieved and deeply shocked that Hitler should believe him a liar, he resigned his position in the party and left for a vacation in Italy. Hitler rubbed his hands with satisfaction; everything had gone as he had hoped. The danger of a *strong* Schleicher cabinet had been avoided and he could now study the best means of ultimately compromising the "Socialist General."

14.—Schleicher resigned himself to the fact that he could not count on direct aid from Gregor Strasser to improve the position of his government. However, he thought that his tie with the Reichswehr was enough to give him the requisite strength. He did not realize that Hitler, considering him a dangerous rival, had decided his fate. Hitler did not attack in the open, although he had at his disposal in the Reichstag the necessary strength to lead such an attack against Schleicher with every chance of success. But for Schleicher a Reichstag defeat would have been "honorable." As its sole consequence he would have been forced to resign temporarily, with nothing to prevent him from returning to power later.

15.—The only positive way to prevent any return of Schleicher would be to compromise him in the eyes of the forces actually in control of affairs: the Prusso-Teutonic. The left wing of his party again became the unconscious tool of Hitler. Nazi delegates of Strasser's group (that is, anti-Junker) introduced a question in the Reichstag on the matter of the Osthilfe abuses. General Ludendorff, whose ties to Hitler were well known, led a violent campaign against Hindenburg concerning the circumstances surrounding the deed of gift to Neudeck. In this way Ludendorff gratified his personal jealousy of Hindenburg. For Hitler, this was but one additional use of blackmail to enable him to succeed to power.

Schleicher also fell into the trap. Believing—as Hitler intended he should—that these attacks had been launched with Hitler's consent, he hoped to secure legislative support from the Nazis by promoting the airing of the scandal in the Reichstag and the press. The Socialists, glad of an opportunity to deal the Junkers a blow, joined in the chorus.

16.—Meanwhile Hitler, directly and through the medium of Goering and Goebbels, maintained close contact with von Papen and through him with the Junkers. He pointed out that Schleicher represented a danger to them because he was

favoring the exposure of the Osthilfe affair. The fact that the flames of this campaign were constantly fanned by Hitler's own acolytes did not embarrass him at all. He explained that he could discipline the fanatics in his party and guarantee that such incidents would not recur in the future only if he were appointed to the office of Chancellor.

17.—It was all blackmail, but von Papen was thinking only of his revenge on Schleicher. Besides he had finally realized that Hitler would accept nothing short of the Chancellorship. Hitler, needing von Papen's contacts with the Junkers and the industrialists, had given him to understand that he would be quite ready to cooperate with him on condition that von Papen content himself with a secondary rôle. The Westphalian was probably already resigned to this. He did not feel himself quite equal to a contest with Hitler and preferred to have him as a friend rather than an enemy. A decisive interview took place between the two men in Cologne, at the home of Baron Schroeder, financier of the heavy industry. Hitler gave assurances to his interlocutors that if he were granted the reins of power he would put an end to the socialistic sallies of his party's left wing.

18.—Von Papen had no difficulty in persuading his friends, the Junkers and industrialists, that they should henceforth place their bets on Hitler. Only the latter was ready to guarantee that the Osthilfe scandal would no longer be discussed. Besides, Hitler could carry out as well as he—or perhaps even better, he must admit—the scheme already outlined by von Papen on which the entire Prussian clique had agreed: constitutional reform with complete concentration of power in the hands of the Chancellor, continuation of the work of rearmament behind the screen of Germany's financial isolation, inaugurated in 1931; and finally, reconstruction by stages of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire. All this had hitherto constituted the Prusso-Teutonic scheme as expounded by

von Papen. Hitler would take charge of it thenceforth for the benefit of the same silent partners.

19.—On January 12, Schleicher was "guest of honor" at the Landbund banquet. A Landbund bulletin was passed around containing a violent attack on the Chancellor. Schleicher demanded an explanation. It was not given. He was made to feel that the article expressed the feelings of the Landbund members and that was all. Schleicher rose and left the hall accompanied by the generals present. He still did not understand that his fate was already sealed. Junkers and the Landbund had let themselves be persuaded by von Papen, and in the end by Hitler, that Schleicher was dangerous to their interests.

He did not realize that nothing could save him now, that only the method of his departure was left to be arranged. Jan Barchusen writing in the magazine *Die Weltbuehne* * on January 24, 1933, said:

"The amount of personal authority with which Schleicher assumed office is already terribly diminished. The Landbund in particular has treated him badly . . ." Barchusen concluded his article with the words: "*The German Reich is a Republic. All power comes from the Landbund.*"

20.—The last act of the tragicomedy took place at the presidential palace. Hindenburg still was hesitating about dropping Schleicher, who seemed to have the generals' support. But his son, Oscar, made it clear that Schleicher was promoting revelations about the Neudeck affair and if that continued, a scandal very embarrassing to father and son might well break out. True, the army still favored Schleicher, but on the other hand the Junkers were absolutely against him and this counted much more. Faced with these considerations the aged Marshal no longer hesitated. On January 28, 1933,

* Published by C. von Ossietzky, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, who was later to die in a concentration camp.

Schleicher asked Hindenburg for the famous decree, signed in advance, which provided for dissolution of the Reichstag. This decree had been granted his predecessors who had ruled with the aid of the threat it contained. Schleicher had no doubt that it was a simple formality and that the decree would be granted him without difficulty. But Hindenburg refused, and Schleicher understood that the President had withdrawn his confidence. He was deeply hurt and resigned.

21.—Nothing remained to be done but to appoint his successor. Von Papen was prepared to let Hitler have the post. The Junkers agreed. Heavy industry agreed. Why shouldn't they, since there was no other candidate available to accomplish what had been planned?

22.—Only Hindenburg was still unable to reach a decision. He had given his word of honor that the "Austrian corporal" would not be Chancellor. The Junkers therefore arranged a final stunt to speed things up. On January 30, 1933, one of their leaders, Count von Alvensleben, rushed to the Presidential palace with the "scoop" that Schleicher had put himself in command of the Potsdam Garrison and was marching on Berlin to arrest Oscar von Hindenburg, Papen, and Hitler. The "news" was pure fabrication but it had its effect. Under the stress of emotion Hindenburg finally consented to have Hitler form a government with von Papen as Vice-Chancellor. The Nazi regime was born.

On January 30, 1933, began the *Gleichschaltung*. The various parties were liquidated in succession and a single party, the Nazi party, was left. Henceforth it was to be the only front for the interests which had promoted its rise to power.

People had the impression that from then on Hitler was sole master of Germany. Everyone wondered at the ease with which he had gained possession of the helm, meeting with no resistance either from left or right. They forgot that the

leftist parties, weakened by underground efforts of the secret societies, were no longer prepared to resist.

As for the forces behind the rightist parties, these had all agreed to consider the Nazi party as their front for the future. No other parties would be necessary. The old garments had served their purpose. They could be thrown away.